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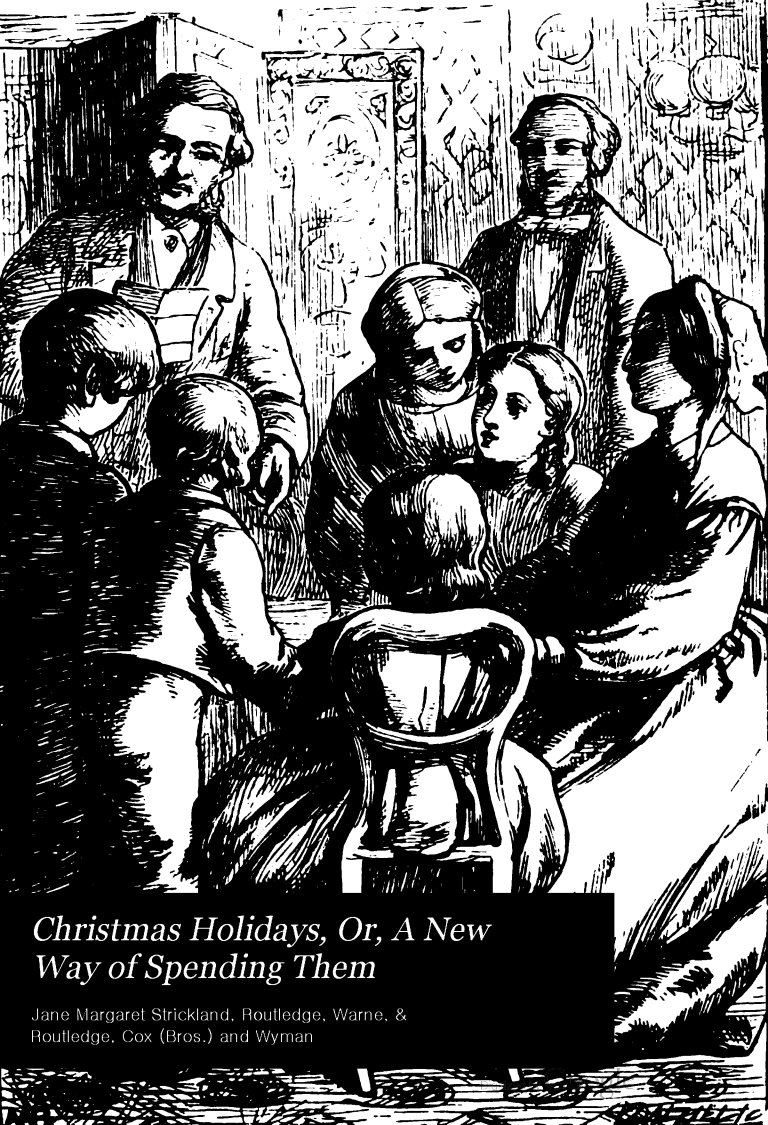

Christmas Holidays, Or, A New Way of Spending Them

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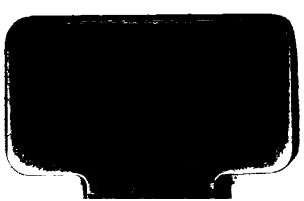

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CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

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Papa revives the law of Restitution.

P. 56.

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Christmas Holidays:

OR,

A NEW WAY OF SPENDING THEM.

BY

MISS JANE STRICKLAND,

AUTHOR OF "ELIZA CLEMENT," "EDWARD EVELYN."

LONDON:
ROUTLEDGE, WARNE, & ROUTLEDGE,
FARRINGDON STREET.
NEW YORK; 56, WALKER STREET.
1864.

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LONDON:
COX AND WYMAN, PRINTERS, GREAT QUEEN STREET,
LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS.

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PREFACE.

THE Christmas vacation is frequently passed by young people in idle dissipation, without any apparent aim but that of spending the time as fast as possible. Time, however, may be spent more agreeably in the pursuit of rational amusement, such as the investigation of many simple and familiar things will provide for intelligent children within their own domestic circle. The Author in this work has chosen such subjects for general discussion as may be examined without much previous study: they are, in fact, familiar conversations upon everyday matters, which are calculated to inform the minds of young people, without depriving them of the rest and pleasure of their Christmas Holidays, while devising for them a new and happy way of spending them.

REYDON HALL,
Christmas-eve, 1863.

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CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

CHAPTER I.

The Family Gathering.—Holiday Anticipations.—Papa's Plan of Spending them.—A Wet Day.—Employment a Cure for Dulness. — Game of Turkey Merchants. — Mamma's Spice-box.—Head-work and Hand-work make Time pass on pleasantly whatever the Weather may be.

In that notable week known throughout the Christian world as the Christmas week, a very happy family party met round Mrs. Beverly's social tea-table to enjoy their first *réunion* at home. These meetings between good parents and affectionate children are always delightful, and will hold their place in the sweet memories of domestic love when more important events have been forgotten.

Our young people, of course, anticipated much pleasure during the Christmas vacation, their ideas of enjoyment taking their tone from the character of each individual in the group. Constance and Ellen, at the advanced ages of four-

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teen and fifteen, built their fabric of happiness on the rational foundation of association with their beloved parents for some weeks to come; while Bertha, Edward, and John considered complete liberty and idleness the true essentials, without which no holidays could be pleasant ones. Now, John and Bertha, who were home for their first vacation, neither having been to school before (what they technically styled) "This Half" might be excused for such mistaken notions; but Edward, who had been to school for several years, and experienced often the pains and penalties of doing nothing but mischief, or the borishness of complete indolence, ought to have known better.

"Oh, what happiness," said John, "to be at home again for six weeks, with nothing to do but to please myself! No Latin, no cross looks from masters, no cane, no ferula, no birch!"

"You might have Latin at a cheaper rate," remarked Mr. Beverly; "the accompaniments to learning you mention do not really belong to it; industry and application keep canes and rods at a distance."

"But it is hard and so very dull, and 'all work and no play' makes poor Jack a dull boy."

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"Almost as dull as all play and no work," rejoined his father.

"No work!" remarked Bertha; "how nice that would be, for I hate sewing; and, now I am home again, I mean to romp about and enjoy my holidays, instead of sitting on a form and stitching and learning to behave one's self when one wants to be skipping about the room. I will not do any needlework for some time to come, whatever may be said of my idleness."

"My dear little Bertha," said her mamma, "I am sorry to cross your plans; but *there will be sewing* and there *will not be romping*, and there must be proper behaviour; for did I not send my little romp to school that she might lose her old tomboy ways?"

"I wish I had been a boy that I might have done as boys do," replied Bertha, pouting; "and then I should have been quite happy."

"What a mistake, Bertha! A rude girl would have made a rude boy; and, as you are a little girl, pray try to be a good one," said papa. "Your sisters always behave like ladies, and they never complain of restraint or wish to be boys that they may be ill-behaved."

While this little dialogue was being carried on, Edward was talking to his elder sister, much

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in the same style as John had recently done, on the pleasures of fishing, shooting, sliding, the absence of lessons, and the delight of having nothing to do.

"People are really doing something, though they fancy they are unemployed; for instance, John is scratching the table, and you are kicking the frame of your chair. Now I am so convinced that employment is essential to happiness that I mean to give you something to do every day this vacation," said Mr. Beverly, "work for the fingers and food for the mind."

The boys looked blank, and then Edward replied, "Indeed, papa, our master has given us some Latin to construe, and pieces of English to turn into Latin. I forgot we had work to do, and not much time to do it in."

"Well, I shall not task you much; but in order to keep you out of mischief, as I said before, something must be done. English history with me I hope to make pleasant to you, and your sisters while they work will enjoy it too."

"How very nice!" said the elder girls; but Bertha made a formal face, to let her sisters know that the plan did not greatly suit her.

Then the young party began to ask for old friends, in the shapes of pet kittens, birds, lambs,

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dogs, donkeys, and kids. Kittens had, however, since "last half" reached cats' estate; puppies no longer merited the appellation; lambs were grown into sheep; kids had become goats, following the law of progress produced by time, that never stands still, however we may waste it. Ellen's squirrel had not yet acquired gravity by age, for he had bounded into the room, and was on her shoulder, proud to display his new collar, and to nestle to her; for these pretty creatures attach themselves to their owners, and always seem happy in the presence of their beloved master or mistress. Ned was quite at liberty; he had been brought up with the cats when they were kittens, and so had nothing to fear from them; but Ellen's voice would bring him down from the loftiest tree in the garden, or lure him from his most secret haunts. Still it was rumoured that Ned's affection for Ellen had never reached that climax of attachment displayed by another squirrel, now deceased, to her father, who had often found his pet in his pocket when on a journey, to his great surprise and possible inconvenience. How the squirrel became aware of his master's intentions had always been an unsolved mystery. It seems probable that domestic animals either understand

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human language to a certain extent, or that the sight of a travelling bag or trunk may suggest to them the notion of a journey.

Constance had a Shetland pony, after whose welfare she made some inquiries; but as pet ponies cannot be introduced into a drawing-room, she was satisfied with hearing that her Hector was in good health, and had attached himself to Mousetrap, her favourite kitten, whom he allowed the privilege of sitting on his neck, and playing with his mane.

The coming morrow, when the whole stock of pets, feline, canine, and equine, could be visited, was eagerly anticipated by our juvenile party, who hoped and confidently expected a fine day.

The assembling together of the reunited family, so long separated, at evening prayer, was an impressive circumstance. During six months of separation no breach had been made in their domestic circle, and they met again to thank Him who had preserved and kept them safely through the manifold changes and vicissitudes of life.

The wished-for day was wet, gloomy, and inauspicious. No shaking of the barometer would make the mercury rise; the attempt might injure the instrument, but not break the

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law that influenced its movements; and this day the young people were to have had for themselves for what Bertha and her brothers styled "a happy do-nothing one."

Constance and Ellen employed themselves in unpacking their trunks, and putting their clothes neatly into their drawers. Bertha grumbled a little at the weather; but finally left off her lamentations to follow their example. As soon as these matters were arranged, the sisters returned to the sitting-room, when Constance and Ellen took out their work, and were very happy in chatting with mamma. Bertha found nothing better to do than the useless employment of trying to teach Mousetrap to walk on her hind-legs. Now, Mousetrap had no wish to acquire this accomplishment, and rewarded her preceptress with a scratch for her pains.

Edward and John looked out of the window, dull and listless as any two creatures could be; play was not suffered in the parlour, so they counted the drops that hung from the window-frame, while their ill-repressed yawns proved that a complete state of idleness is not one of enjoyment. Reading was out of the question at present, for their minds were in an unsettled state.

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"Boys, what is the matter to-day? I do not hear your voices; yet talking is not forbidden, provided you are not too noisy," said papa.

"We are so dull, dear papa, so disappointed; for it is impossible to go out, and we do not know what to do with ourselves till to-morrow."

"You want something to do. Well, I will not only find you a cure for your malady, but pay you for taking my prescription. That bookcase wants arranging, and if you do it to my satisfaction, I will give you sixpence apiece. Now, you must take care neither to mismatch the volumes, nor jumble books of science and amusement together on the same shelf; but to give those on each subject their appropriate place. As they are all bound alike, you must pay some attention to this point. I like to have my religious books arranged very carefully too. 'Order is heaven's first law.'"

Schoolboys are always glad of a sixpence, and to find a cure for dulness and the gain of sixpence each, combined with light labour, was pleasant enough to John and Edward, who went steadily to work, not speaking, excepting to ask an occasional question about works of science, "and whether those on art might be on the same shelf." And Mr. Beverly thought they might,

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as science must be aided by art, only he directed that his mathematical books should not be mixed with those on other subjects.

"Those horrid ones with A and B and C, papa," remarked Bertha, looking up from the parcels of garden-seeds which, under her father's direction, she was sorting into packets, in order to earn her sixpence, and lose her weariness, like her brothers—"those letters make my head ache only to look at them."

"Silly child! if you were learning Algebra, you would not be able to get on without them. Never despise what you do not understand. See, I am putting some hard names on these papers for your seeds."

"I wish, papa, you would put the easy English ones."

Mr. Beverly saw nothing unreasonable in Bertha's request, but good-naturedly complied with her wish by adding the common names to his packets of flower-seeds.

"There is a sound reason for the hard names, my dear; for they form a kind of universal language, well known to all botanists. The daisy would not be recognised out of our own island by its pretty Anglo-Saxon appellation, but as the *Bellis perennis*, it is known throughout

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Europe. *Linum*, or flax, which you are getting ready for me, is as easily uttered as its English denomination."

"But this is linseed, is it not?" asked Constance, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, the *linum* produces these seeds, from which oil is extracted; the residue is also used for feeding cattle. Mamma gives you linseed tea when you have a cold."

"So," remarked Ellen, "we can have clothing, light, food, and medicine from one plant; for I have tasted oilcake, and rather than starve, I dare say I could live upon it."

By the time the books were arranged, the seeds sorted, and Mr. Beverly's workpeople paid, there was still an hour to spare till luncheon; so our boys thought a quiet game would be pleasant after their labours.

Bertha said "Turkey Merchants" would be nice, if mamma had no objection.

Mamma, who was filling her spicebox against Christmas-eve, not only had no objection, but offered to begin the game herself, which, according to rule, she did in this manner:—

"I am a spice merchant, and I sell a pretty flower-bud, that smells sweet, and has a fine aromatic flavour——"

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"But, mamma," said John, "you must tell the first and last letter of what you sell, and say whether it is singular or plural."

"Well, then, my article begins with 'C' and ends in 'es,' for it is plural."

"It must be cloves—only they are seeds, not flower-buds, mamma," replied Edward.

"Ah, mamma, you must be mistaken; for how can they be flower-buds?" remarked Bertha —"yet you shake your head."

Constance and Ellen were puzzled; but they were too well bred even to insinuate that their sensible mother could be mistaken in anything.

"As I have guessed the article you sell, perhaps, mamma, you will explain what you mean by saying cloves are flower-buds," remarked Edward.

"Cloves are the flower-buds of the *caryophyllus*, or clove tree, which is a native of Amboyna, an island in the Indian Ocean. The tree resembles the laurel in growth and the form of its leaves. The flower-buds are first white, then after a time they become green, and lastly turn red. After which they are gathered, dried in the sun, and packed for commerce. If you carefully open the round end or bud portion of the clove, you may still distinguish that it

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belongs to the monogynia order, and polyandria class of plants."

Constance and Ellen easily distinguished that the bud was set in a four-parted calyx as tough as wood, and with the help of a pin, made out the botanical structure of the flower, though it had never been suffered to bloom.

Mamma had something still to say of *Aromaticus caryophyllus.* Nothing would grow under its shade: of its uses in flavouring she need not speak, as they all liked it in apple tarts; it was much used, too, in medicine, as a tonic.

"Is there not a bright crimson flower in the garden called a clove, shaped like a pink, mamma?" asked John.

"The *Dianthus caryophyllus,* so called from its having the peculiar odour of the clove, and it is a very beautiful flower."

"Suppose, dear mamma, you tell us the nature of all your spices," said Ellen; "for common things in general use may have something remarkable about them."

Mamma was willing to impart her knowledge, and commenced with cinnamon and cassia, both of which she described as laurels or bays; the first being a native of Ceylon, the second of China. She scarcely needed to tell them that

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the bark of the side branches afforded the spice. *Cassia* and *Cinnamonium* were trees of majestic growth, the last being adorned with bunches of elegant white flowers, the odour of which did not partake of the sweetness of the bark."

"I wish our laurels had such nice bark as cassia and cinnamon trees," said Bertha.

"Our broad-leaved laurel, though often called the cherry-bearing bay, is not a laurel at all, but belongs to the same family as our plums and cherries," replied mamma. "What you call Alexandrine, or Victory laurel, has no real claim to the name: it is a *Ruscus*, and you will find it belongs to the same class and order as butcher's-broom."

"Julius Cæsar, then, was crowned with the leaves of a plant of a sort of butcher's-broom," remarked Constance, musingly.

"Not inappropriate for the blood-stained wreath of a conqueror," said Mr. Beverly; "and if that mighty Roman had done nothing better than win battles, we should not think much of him now. However, Maria, go on with your spice."

"The nutmeg (*Myristica moschata*) grows on a tree rarely found in any place but the Indian island of Banda; it belongs to a curious species

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of plants, for the pistil grows on one tree, while the anthers are found on another. We have examples in England of this arrangement in the dogwood and snow-ball tree, but it is not common. The nutmeg is enclosed like our walnut in a drupa or green shell, which opens when the nut is ripe. Mace, another spice more precious than what it covers, is found of a bright crimson colour surrounding the hard woody shell that encloses the kernel, or nutmeg of commerce. After the mace has been carefully removed, the shell it covers is beaten with sticks till it falls off, when the nutmeg is cured for consumption.

"The pimento, or allspice, is the purple berry of a beautiful tree of the myrtle species. If you break one of these berries, you will find two small kidney-shaped seeds. Pimento grows everywhere in the West Indies, for the birds scatter the berries, and as it requires no culture it is very cheap.

"Ginger is a plant which grows in the East and West Indies—a spike of elegant blue flowers rising from the side of each wide-spreading jointed root to the height of three feet. These roots are dried for use, but the delicate preserved ginger is made from them when green. Pepper

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is a native of Sumatra and the Indian islands, and grows on a low shrub with heart-shaped leaves. The blossoms which produce the bunches of currant-formed berries are white. You see I have both black and white pepper in my box, but the last is the same dark berry stripped of its black outside coat; red or cayenne pepper is made from the beautiful scarlet capsicum, which John has not only seen but gathered and tasted to his cost."

John, who was very gustative, hung down his head and blushed,—as well he might, for he had gathered it slily in the greenhouse, to the gardener's indignation, and his own punishment.

"You have forgotten the Jamaica long pepper," said Bertha.

"The *Piper inequale* is said to be of the same species as the black pepper of the East, but of that I am not sure. It grows in Jamaica, on a tall bush with dark shining leaves, and is more used in the West Indies than here.

"I have now come to an end of my spicebox lecture, and need only say that England produces none of these precious things which her commerce has made so useful to us."

The rain came down steadily, but it was no

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longer lamented: finger-work and head-work had done their duty, and had not only banished dulness, but given our young party a very good appetite for the mid-day meal.

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CHAPTER II.

The Plan put in Practice.—The Romans in Britain.—Early Introduction of Christianity: to whom imputed.—The Foundation of the Saxon Church.—Roman Triumphs.—Temperance of Julius Cæsar.—Edward's great Fault.—His Desultory Reading.—His Dilemma.—Constance allowed to give him a Reference.—The Example of Cæsar proves a useful Lesson to our young Epicure.—His Name at School.

THE heavy rain had been followed by frost, which was succeeded by several days of snow—snow without intermission. Our boys and Bertha were very malcontent, but as grumbling cannot charm away bad weather, they were compelled to stay within, and even began to find the plans suggested by their parents for their moral and mental improvement a resource against weariness. Bertha was given some plain needlework to do from mamma's poor-box—baby linen of a strong useful kind; and, much as the little girl disliked sewing, her charitable feelings inclined her to take more pains, and use more expedition, in this business than she would have done in anything for herself. Constance and Ellen, convinced by their sensible mother that plain work

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ought to form a part of feminine education, had undertaken to make papa a set of fine shirts, which they were to cut out for the first time themselves. They were surprised at seeing in the midst of their contrivances for getting wristbands and other parts, how often papa could assist them where they were at a loss themselves; but mathematicians can find almost at a glance what can be got out of certain squares and angles, without turning the cloth round, as our young sempstresses were obliged to do. Constance and Ellen did not confine themselves wholly to useful work: they were learning to illuminate in the ancient style—a captivating amusement, which permitted them to listen to Lingard's History of England, which their brothers were reading in turns to their father.

In the "Pictorial History of England" our young artists found some charming specimens of ornamental letters and figures; though, not knowing the colours, they painted them from fancy. Of course they were never dull, not even when the dark days compelled them to give up illuminating for employments that required less light; but of the dull void of unoccupied time they knew nothing.

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Mr. Beverly permitted his sons to ask any questions or to make any remarks they pleased upon the portion of history they were reading; for he wished them to take an interest in the annals of their own country; and he made them also compare the events recorded by the learned historian with the progress of civilization so ably narrated in the "Pictorial History of England." His own extensive reading enabled him to give some additional information on many subjects.

"How I hate those Romans," suddenly remarked Bertha. "What business had they in England?"

"They had a mission to perform, my dear child, in which they were the unconscious agents. I can almost forgive their ambition for the sake of the good they did us,—good which still continues."

"What good, papa," asked Bertha, "did those invading robbers do to Britain?"

"They gave us better laws, useful arts, and cleanly habits; they taught us to build towns, encouraged commerce, and finally brought us the Gospel. Pomponia Græcina, a noble Roman lady, the wife of the pro-consul Plautius, is supposed to have conferred that inestimable benefit upon Britain. Her friend Claudia, celebrated by Martial the poet for her beautiful, fair com-

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plexion, was a native of Britain, and the barbarian wife of Pudens is mentioned in conjunction with her husband, at the conclusion of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in the list of those to whom he sent greetings. Claudia was not only beautiful, but remarkable for feminine modesty: indeed, the merits of the British lady must have been very great to have induced a Roman senator to overlook her foreign extraction."

"But, papa, I thought a French princess gave Christianity to Britain?" remarked Ellen.

"The marriage of Bertha to Ethelbert, the Saxon king of Kent, brought about the mission already planned by Pope Gregory for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, as the bride of the pagan king of Kent brought St. Augustin and his brother missionaries in her train to Britain. Fortunately, the heathen spouse of Bertha was so fond of his Christian wife, that he gave up the structure in Canterbury, now known as the ancient British church of St. Martin, which he used for his stable, for the celebration of Christian worship. After a time, Bertha prevailed upon the king to listen to the preaching of St. Augustin, and, 'as faith comes by hearing,' the conversion of Ethelbert soon followed his attention to the doctrines taught by the Christian missionary.

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Civilization and wiser laws were the fruits of Christianity in Kent, and from thence overspread the island.

"It is a remarkable fact that the rise of the Roman power conduced to the promulgation of the Gospel, as its destruction afterwards led to the conversion of those heathen nations that subverted it. Kingdoms decay and conquerors perish, while the sublime truths of religion can never be destroyed, but must remain for ever."

These digressions were useful to our young people, especially as Mr. Beverly noted down some authors in which full and interesting accounts of the early history of the British and Anglo-Saxon churches were to be found, which he wished his children to read for their own amusement and improvement.

"We have forgotten the Romans all this time," said Constance; "you must know I like them better than the Saxons, for I have heard that we owe our beautiful forest trees chiefly to them."

"So Loudon, in his 'Arboretum Britannicum,' tells us," replied mamma; "and, indeed, he reduces our native trees to a very slender catalogue: oaks, hazels, the low-spreading indigenous fir, and a few others, are all he enumerates.

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Although Britain was overrun with tangled woods, yet these could not have resembled our beautiful forest lands, adorned with that infinite variety of foliage which so delights our eyes at this time. We are also indebted to these civilizing conquerors for most of our choice fruit: the cherry was brought by them from Pontus, as well as the apple and pear; the apricot from Media; the peach from Persia, or Parthia, as it was then called; grapes and figs grew in their own sunny land. Indeed, a Roman triumph exhibited the complete natural history of the countries conquered. Fruit-trees, flowers, rare perfumes; in fact, every production of nature or art was there displayed: the captives in their native costume, from the prince to the slave, appeared in a living panorama before the eyes of the Roman people. The worst feature in it was the cruel tragedy at the conclusion; for when the chariot of the victor was turned towards the Capitol, the captives were generally put to death."

"I hope, indeed, dear mamma, that there were some exceptions?" said Constance.

"Some there were indeed, my dear; for Pompey, greater in this than in any other action of his life, would not suffer his captives to be put

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to death, in which he certainly outshone Cæsar, and better deserved the praise of clemency."

"I suppose," remarked Edward, "that the conqueror was the happiest man in Rome on the day of his triumph?"

"Cæsar was not, owing to the ribald custom that permitted the soldiers to invent anything they pleased to the disparagement of their general, if the donative, or gift, he assigned them did not satisfy their avaricious expectations. His army were not pleased with his large donative, and assailed his ears with bitter sarcasms and indelicate songs; so that he afterwards assured his private friends that the day of his great triumph was the most miserable of his life."

"Well, but that was merely one instance," rejoined Edward.

"Paulus Emilius, the conqueror of Persius, controlled with difficulty the intense grief he felt for the son he had just lost, and his anxiety for that beloved one he had left dying at home; and you remember, I dare say, that Persius and his captive family preceded the chariot of the victor, and were not put to death; and that the innocent children excited the pity of the populace. After the pageant was over, Paulus

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Emilius compared his hidden sorrow with that of the conquered Macedonian monarch, and considered the vanquished who still had his children, was happier than the victor who had been bereaved of his; and declared 'that in this life something must always be wanting to perfect felicity.'" In territorial acquisition, she thought there was, and always must be, room for regret, even in the triumphal entry; but there was one in which feelings of the purest patriotism must have swelled the bosom of that consul who rode by the side of his colleague, without an army or laurel crown, or even the official dress denoting his high rank. She thought some of her young people would remember the incident to which she alluded. Edward, as he was interested in the Romans, and in their triumphs in particular, would relate the anecdote.

Edward blushed and was mute. Constance looked up from her work, and replied, but in a modest unassuming way, "I think, mamma, you mean the consul Nero, during the contest between the Romans and Hannibal, who, when apprised of the march of Asdrubal, to effect a junction with his brother Hannibal, did not wait for orders from the senate, but chose a select body of troops

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and quitted his province, notwithstanding the penalty he incurred by so doing,* to save his country. He was so rapid in his march, that but for the double flourish of trumpets that denoted the presence of both consuls in the Roman camp, Asdrubal would have been ignorant of the arrival of Nero and his army, which had been received during the night by his colleague Livius Salinator."

"The battle of Metaurus decided the fate of Rome," remarked Mr. Beverly; "the defeat and death of Asdrubal deprived Hannibal of the means of continuing the contest with any chance of success. The senate of Carthage, always opposed to the Italian campaigns of their greatest son, had refused him the succour he demanded, and when the head of his able and devoted brother, which, by the command of Nero, had been thrown within his lines, was brought to him, he sighed and uttered these prophetic words,—'It is like the fortune of Carthage.'"

"It was late in the autumn," continued Constance, "when the triumph took place, but

* It was not lawful for the consul to quit the province assigned him by the senate without permission, and Nero had not time to obtain it.

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Livius Salinator alone occupied the triumphal chariot; for no consul was permitted this privilege unless his army was with him, and Nero was obliged to leave his for the protection of his province. He was allowed to visit Rome in this sort of *incognito,* but every eye was fixed upon the man whose patriotic promptitude had ensured the safety of his country."

"Oh, mamma, you are right: his feelings must have been enviable at that proud moment."

"I wish," said the gentle Ellen, "that he had not thrown Asdrubal's head into Hannibal's camp."

"My dear child," replied mamma, "Nero was a heathen, and acted like one, and that is the only excuse we can make for his barbarous policy."

"And I wish, Ellen, he had not played the fool in his censorship by reviving his old quarrels with Livius Salinator; for these warriors, who had forgotten their old hatred to unite for the good of their country, as soon as the peril that threatened Rome was over, made their censorship a time of disgraceful feuds and low squabbles, and covered themselves while in office with ridicule and contempt. Nothing, my dear children, is more

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foolish than the follies of the wise," remarked Mr. Beverly.

"I admire Julius Cæsar," cried Edward; "he is my hero."

"I wish you would imitate him in his temperance in regard to eating," remarked his father; "as you profess to admire him, I shall require you to relate an anecdote illustrative of this quality in your hero."

Now Edward was fond of reading in a desultory way, for he never read any book through if he could help it, but dipped into it here and there. This way of reading had filled his head with an odd jumble of facts and fables. He had read a good deal about the great Roman, but to find among his miscellaneous sources of information something he was to imitate him for—a censure, too, upon his plan of getting the best of everything for himself—was not only puzzling, but positively disheartening.

"May Con help me, papa; for I am sure I shall never find it out by myself?"

"I think," said Constance, "papa means his behaviour at a dinner-party, to which he was invited with his officers."

"Yes I do; and as I have every work in which Julius Cæsar is mentioned, in English transla

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tions or in French, it will not be difficult for Edward to find the story out, which between this and New Year's-day he may easily do."

We will not relate all the yawns, sighs, and murmurs of Julius Cæsar's admirer, during his long search for this anecdote. At last, Constance was permitted to advise him to read Plutarch's life of his hero very attentively, when he found that Cæsar had eaten asparagus served with bad oil, at the table of a rich but miserly host, without the smallest symptom of disgust, though his officers rejected the dish with contemptuous gestures and impertinent remarks.

I am afraid Edward sometimes wished his hero had been less polite, for if the young epicure was disposed to find fault with any dish he did not like, or to choose the best apple or orange, or pick for the largest piece of cake, the arch looks of Constance and Ellen, or the whispered name of Julius Cæsar from Bertha and John, obliged him to refrain from fastidiousness of appetite or greediness. The story went back with him to school, where it obtained for him the appellations rendered so illustrious by the mighty Roman. However, Edward was wholly cured of his odious fault.

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CHAPTER III.

Alice Malden.—Her domestic Employments.—Christmas in the olden Time.—Derived from the Saturnalia.—Nero, the first Persecutor of the Church.—His Saturnalia.

CHRISTMAS was rapidly drawing near: the snow lay thick upon the ground; but our young ladies, provided by careful mamma with warm snow-boots, could take outdoor exercise and visit with her the cottages of the working classes, to dispense tickets for coals and blankets provided by the general charity of those inhabitants of Selwood who were willing and able to help their poorer neighbours. Alice Malden, the motherless daughter of the good rector, was often their companion on these expeditions; she, being nearly twenty, frequently took charge of her younger friends, who derived great advantage from the intercourse with one whose experience in life was untinctured with formality. The necessity of supplying the place of her mother, as the head of the family, at the early age of sixteen, had given solidity to her character, which Christian piety had tempered with the spirit of love. Her deep grief for the loss of her beloved mother had not

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prevented her from endeavouring to perform her new duties, though her studious turn of mind had rather disposed her to scholastic than domestic employments. But the internal comfort of the house depended upon female arrangement: the rector was not rich, and had had several sons by a former wife to set forward in life, and being, like most of our Anglican Church, charitable to all who needed it, the prudent economy of his young daughter enabled him to do much without great self-sacrifice. As Constance and Ellen were very fond of Alice, they were often with her, and sometimes even aided her in sundry domestic offices. If they found her with a basket of stockings to mend, in her little private sanctum, they were only too happy to assist her.

Sometimes they found her in the store-room making pastry, cakes, or bread, and the sisters with looking on were soon able to help her, till at last they were inspired with the laudable ambition of learning the art of confectionary themselves. Now, some of my young lady readers may think that the daughters of gentlemen of fortune need not concern themselves about such matters as these, particularly when a hired housekeeper in their own houses arranges and prepares everything of the kind that may be

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needed. Plain needlework, too, can be done cheaply in schools, and even by sewing machines. This, in one sense, may be true, and agrees with the natural division of labour, if no change of circumstances could come; but the course of this world is not always smooth: "riches," we are told, "make to themselves wings and fly away;" while the knowledge of any useful art, however humble it may be, is not lost though its exercise may be left off when not actually necessary. Constance and Ellen, who never had a thought their mother might not share, consulted her upon the propriety of learning Alice's domestic accomplishments, and received her approbation of the plan in this manner. Opening the Bible, she read from the tenth verse of the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs to the end, the description given by King Lemuel's mother of the virtuous woman, whose price is beyond rubies.

"There, my dear children, we have a complete enumeration of domestic employments practised by a rich woman, whose piety and charity gave a stimulus to her industry. I never find Alice performing so cheerfully her homely household duties without thinking of this passage in Proverbs. Accomplished and

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well informed as she is in social intercourse, there is to me something infinitely more interesting in her while employed for the general good of her family. She is what a clergyman's daughter ought to be,—a young woman adorning the Christian profession. A blessing indeed seems to rest on all she does, for if poor she makes many rich."

Under Alice's teaching her young friends learned the art of making mincemeat, that indigestible Saxon dainty found in Richard the Second's cookery-book, and derived from the piratical Saxon rovers, who had ventured up the Archipelago in their long chiules* to plunder the East and improve their festal days with the fruits and spices of fairer lands. Alice amused them by relating the old custom of bringing as many small mince-pies in one dish on the Christmas table as the master and mistress of the house had been married years, and that in the Memoirs of a Puritan clergyman of the name of Walker, by his wife,† she mentions that fifty-six mince-pies were set upon the table, according to the years of their wedded life. "It is a pretty book, too," said Alice, "one that did me

* Chiule, the long ship of the Saxon pirate was so called.

† In Charles the Second's time.

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good in many ways; but I ought to have told you, that what remained uneaten of these Christmas pies was given to the poor the following day. Many old customs as well as this," she said, "had passed away. Some, indeed, 'were more honoured in the breach than the observance,' such as the burlesques upon the Church, permitted to the people before the Reformation, when riotous games and quaint masquerades both preceded and followed Christmas; when folly, under an elected abbot of misrule, subverted for a time Christian decency and order; servants no longer reverenced their masters, but turned them into ridicule before their faces, so that from the palace of the king to the hall of the noble, or the monastery of the monk, these revels prevailed, when the low-born thrall for a time seemed to have changed his place in the household. These customs," she was happy to say, "were not Christian, they were essentially heathen, derived from the feast of the Saturnalia, held on the 21st of December and some days after, when the slaves were allowed the privilege of shaking off the yoke of servitude and electing masters from among themselves. But, even while adopting to please her converts these absurdities, the Church had opened the gates of

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hospitality to all. Every larder was open to relieve the wants of the hungry, and the houseless poor found a shelter in the proud baronial hall, and this redeeming feature alone divided it from its heathen parentage. It had been the policy of the Church to replace by Christian festivals the old heathen ones to which custom had attached her converts; but this laudable motive had not always been productive of good effect, and was besides in direct opposition to the rules laid down by St. Paul, in many of his epistles." But Alice had something still to say, "respecting the Saturnalia originally founded by Sextius Tullus, Rome's best and wisest king, to soften the woes of slavery which he had himself felt. To Christians its name would ever recal the era of the first persecution of the Church, when Nero gave to the cross, or arrayed in the flaming tunic, the innocent and faithful followers of Christ, against whom he had for some time hoarded his revenge. Accused of having set Rome on fire himself, without any proof but the badness of his own character, he suborned persons to swear that the Christians were the true authors of the mighty conflagration, that, after raging six days, left him without a metropolis and the Romans without a home."

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"But how came he to lay the burning of Rome upon the Christians?" asked Bertha.

"Because the preaching of St. Paul had won from the paths of sin his favourite mistress and his cupbearer; at least, so the ancient traditions of the Church declare. They quitted their evil ways and were baptized; but the revenge of Nero sought not only their destruction, but that of the Christians with whom they had taken refuge. He hoped, by exhibiting them during the Saturnalia in the flaming tunic of the incendiary, to clear himself from the imputation of a crime he had never committed. But even the prejudiced heathen could not be convinced of the emperor's innocence or the Christians' guilt. They were acquitted by the voice of the public; 'For humanity itself,' remarks Tacitus, 'relented in favour of the Christians.'

"It was during this short but dreadful persecution that St. Peter was crucified in the Circus Maximus, and St. Paul was beheaded in the Ostian Way. A small church, dedicated to St. Peter, afterwards was erected by the Emperor Constantine on the spot where this zealous and affectionate disciple suffered. This has been replaced by the most magnificent Christian temple in the world.

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"The church of St. Paul also marks the spot of the martyrdom of the apostle of the Gentiles, and there can be no historic doubt that the remains of these holy men rest within the temples that bear their names. St. Paul's Roman citizenship preserved him from the cruel cross, but not from the lictor's axe. Thus Christmas should be doubly hallowed to us, not only as the nativity of 'that blest babe who did redeem our loss,' but also as that period in which the two great apostles and their converts fought under the banner of their crucified Lord, won the victory, and gained their martyr crowns in the stronghold of Satan—the great metropolis of the Gentile world."

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CHAPTER IV.

The Frost.—Sliding and Skating.—Bertha's Disobedience.—Consequences of a Practical Joke.—Ellen's Danger.—Constance refuses to violate the Truth.—The Contest hurtful to Ellen.—Alice Malden's Helpfulness.—Constance's Appeal.—The Right Thing in a Right Time.—The Rector conveys Ellen to the Parsonage.—His Conversation with Bertha.—Refuses to palliate her Faults.—Children responsible Agents.—The Rector's Advice taken by Bertha.

CHRISTMAS, with its feasting and its Christmas trees, its games, its charities, and decorated windows and mantelpieces, was gliding fast into the new year. The frost had come at last; the snow was frozen; every path and brook was firm as a floor of adamant. The beautiful rime glistened like diamonds from every tree and shrub on which the refracted beams of the sun played gloriously without destroying the wondrous pageantry. Sliding and skating, now, were all the rage at Selwood Hall. Edward and John had besought a few days for outdoor plays as some compensation for their long confinement indoors. The request seemed reasonable and was immediately granted, papa promising to put

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on his skates, and show them what he could do in cutting spread-eagles, figures of eight, and performing other feats of skill and dexterity on the ice. But he added that as he had a little business in the village, he could name no precise time. Their sisters would walk to meet him, and then they could all enjoy the fun together. This plan did not please Bertha, who wanted to slide with her brothers, and who suspected, not without reason, that the family walk with papa was designed to keep her from venturing on the ice, mamma not approving of sliding or skating for young ladies. She looked very sulky, and though she took papa's arm, she hung back in a very ungraceful and uncourteous manner.

Mr. Beverly easily comprehended the motive of her ill-behaviour, and exchanged a comical look with his elder girls, who were trying to hide the mirthfulness that was dimpling round their rosy lips.

Our boys rather regretted the loss of Bertha's company, but consoled themselves by pelting the groom with snowballs while he was employing himself for their benefit by sweeping the large pond clear for their coveted amusement. Then they enjoyed their slide, and after a time put on their skates and got no falls, but being

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tired and hot, wished for papa and his figures, hoped the frost would last the whole winter, and wondered why the party were so long in coming. At last, a gentleman with bonneted and muffled ladies came in sight, and the party was duly received with a long hurra, which Bertha ventured to answer in kind, while Constance and Ellen contented themselves with waving their handkerchiefs.

Papa was as good as his word, and astonished his sons with his dexterity and skill; but having had a walk, and not being so active at fifty as at fifteen, he gave over betimes, but left his girls behind him to see the last slide for that day. Bertha he hoped would not disobey him by venturing on the ice; Constance and Ellen he knew required no caution. He was scarcely out of sight when Bertha, regardless alike of the prohibition or her sisters' entreaties, was on the ice, sporting about with fearless dexterity, her cheeks glowing with the warmth of the forbidden exercise, sometimes approaching the bank to make funny faces, or use some arts of persuasion to induce her sisters to join her.

"You naughty creature, you will break your neck," said Ellen, reproachfully.

"Not I, indeed; oh, it is capital fun. Come

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on, Nelly, we will teach you to slide. Come, Constance."

"Pray come off the ice, Bertha," cried both the sisters, entreatingly.

Bertha drew near enough to reach Ellen's outstretched hand, but instead of taking it to aid herself in ascending the steep bank, pulled Ellen upon the ice, and gave her a smart push that sent her off to the opposite bank. Ellen knew nothing of the art of keeping her balance; soft and feminine in all her actions, and timid by nature, the velocity of the motion took away her breath, and even her terror; then she tottered, and in another moment was lying on the ice, in a state of utter unconsciousness. Constance stood wringing her hands, while Edward, John, and Bertha were carrying the insensible form of Ellen to the bank.

"She is dead, Bertha, quite dead," whispered the boys, on whose faces the flush of exercise had yielded to a chilling paleness.

Bertha gave way to a passionate fit of tears.

Constance sat down and placed her sister's languid head on her lap, and presently exclaimed, "She is not dead, for her heart still beats."

She then directed her brothers to chafe Ellen's hands, while she kept her in a reclining posi-

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tion. Ellen opened her eyes, but it was some minutes before she seemed to comprehend where she was, and what had happened to her.

"She is coming to. I can see the pink coming back to the pale cheek," said Edward; "look, Bertha, at Ellen, and leave off crying."

But Bertha could not check her tears, nor leave off crying; she was too much frightened for that, and Ellen's arms were round her neck before she could recover anything like self-possession. Her first thoughts had been for Ellen, her second were for herself. The dread of censure and punishment made her selfish when her anxiety for her sister's life was lessened.

"Pray, don't tell papa or mamma, good, kind Ellen," cried Bertha, aided by her brothers in full chorus.

Ellen promised, and half-raised herself to kiss the culprit, but fell back into the arms of the frightened Constance, with a shriek of pain, putting her hand to her head, and continuing to moan, after a strong mental effort had made her repress a second cry.

"Mamma must know it," said Constance; "blows on the head are dangerous, and poor Ellen is in great pain."

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"She has promised not to tell," rejoined Bertha doggedly, "and you have no right——"

"*I have not promised,*" quietly remarked Constance; "and my dear, dear sister may lose her intellect, or even her life, for want of medical care."

"Ill-natured creature! You want me to be punished. I hate tell-tales," replied Bertha, with a sneer.

"And so do we," rejoined the boys, with whom their youngest sister was a great favourite.

"You had better not, dear Constance," whispered Ellen. "Indeed, I shall be better soon."

"You will be worse if the hurt is not attended to," said Constance, "and that it must be, and by the doctor too. Much as I hate telling tales, or being called a tell-tale, I will not suffer my sister's life to be sacrificed to a weak compliance to save a naughty girl from the consequences of her disobedience and folly. If you felt for Ellen instead of feeling for yourself, you would not wish to hide your fault at her expense."

Bertha was about to make some sharp retort to Constance, when she saw, to her horror, that poor Ellen had sunk into a second swoon. Her screams brought another person to the spot, one well skilled to give aid, full of pity for suffering

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in every shape; and, though young, possessed of that presence of mind that becomes calm and helpful in times of need and danger. This was Alice, the rector's daughter, whose truthful eyes seemed to ask for truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

"Oh, Alice, dear Alice! I have killed Ellen, and have behaved shamefully to poor Constance. Oh, what shall I do?" said Bertha.

"Repent, and do better another time. Run, Bertha, to the parsonage; papa is at home, and he will carry her to our house. Thank God, no bones are broken."

Alice set down her little basket of comforts for the poor, and from a phial of wine moistened first the lips, and then gradually put a small quantity into the sufferer's mouth. Ellen soon revived, for the dispute between Constance and Bertha had, in her weak state, overpowered her.

"You heard it all?" whispered Constance to her friend.

"Yes, I did, and thought you right in your determination, but unwise to flurry your poor Ellen in her weak state. Quiet is everything, in all cases of accident or sickness. Why did you answer Bertha at all?

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Sometimes, dear love, we must content ourselves with being in the right without upholding it."

Constance blushed; she had been betrayed into warmth by the provocation she had received. Alice was just the wise elder sister friend she wanted.

By this time the rector and his man-servant came up, followed by Bertha, panting from fast running. Ellen was carried to the parsonage, undressed by Alice and Constance, and the family surgeon sent for; after which the rector proceeded with Bertha to the Hall to break as well as he could, without disguising the truth, Ellen's alarming accident to her parents. Bertha was bewildering her little head in framing some plausible excuses for her conduct; but being uneasy in conscience, she asked her old friend "Whether there would be any harm in making the best of the matter; for mamma would be so grieved, and papa would be very angry with her, she knew, for going on the ice herself, and, still more, for pulling Ellen upon it, and setting her off. Perhaps he would tell it for her."

"So I will, if you wish it, Bertha; only I should relate it as truthfully as possible. I can find nothing to extenuate in the first step, of which the second was only a consequence. You

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pulled your sister on the ice to make a good excuse for yourself, and prevent her telling of you."

Bertha hung down her head; some such calculation, besides her love of rude fun, like a hidden undercurrent, had influenced her conduct. But how came the rector to know it? She was a little artful, for we all have our besetting sins, and her pastor had found out this point in her character. "What would you have me do? for indeed, sir, what you say is true."

"I would have you do what the Prodigal did in the 15th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. I would make no excuses, but would say that I had been a very naughty child, and had disobeyed my parents, and broken God's commandments, who had bidden me honour them. That I had tried to make my sisters disobedient, and had endangered Ellen's life by compelling her to be disobedient against her will."

Bertha shook her head. "I never can say it, sir; but if you would tell them it would make me keep the truth. I could not help making some excuse for myself."

"Well, my dear child, I will take that upon myself; for, if you empower me to speak the

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truth for you, that will be nearly the same thing."

"And, perhaps, dear Mr. Malden, you would say something about my being very young—quite a little girl."

Bertha pressed his arm coaxingly, and with bright, hopeful eyes, looked into her old friend's face.

"My dear Bertha, you know right from wrong as well as I do myself," said the rector, gravely. "If you were fifty years old, you could not know it better. Now I am afraid you are not really so sorry for your disobedience as you ought to be. You are very sorry for Ellen, because you love her; but it is not only the consequence of our sins, but the sins themselves, for which we should grieve. You have offended God; go and seek His pardon, through His Son, as the prodigal did, and in the same words, if you can find no others in which to ask His forgiveness."

Bertha wept so piteously while her friend was talking to her, and yet more while he was relating the history of Ellen's accident, of which she had been the cause, to her parents, that it was considered she had already received sufficient punishment for her faults. She was soon forgiven, much sooner

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than she could forgive herself; for, with all her faults, she possessed those qualities that, with proper culture, would form a fine character. Her parents had sent her to school, that they might not be too indulgent to errors which were combined with some virtues and many winning ways.

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CHAPTER V.

Behaviour in a Sick Room.—Alice nurses Ellen.—Her Recovery. — Bertha's Sedateness not lasting. — Her Pertness.—Misconduct of Edward and John.—Wanton Mischief.—Widow Taylor and her Sow.—The Game on the Ice not so pleasant to the Sow as to the Boys.—A Passenger's Reproof.—Bad Consequences of their Frolic.—The Petition.—The Discovery.—Papa revives the Law of Restitution in Widow Taylor's favour.—Self-inflicted Poverty.—Bertha's Fun with the Lion Cubs.—Mortification of our Heroes.

ELLEN was bled, and kept in a darkened room for a week; nor was Constance suffered to read or amuse her for fear of exciting the brain, which had been shaken by the fall. Only a few words of prayer were uttered, and a short section of Scripture was read or repeated by mamma or Alice at intervals. Constance kept papa company at home, coming in but once a day to see her darling Ellen; and Bertha was not permitted to visit her suffering sister at all. Alice was head nurse,—so quiet, cheerful, and sympathizing,—anticipating, as it were, every want and wish of the poor patient. Indeed, she was used to witness suffering in every shape; for, young as she was

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in years, she was old in experience. There was no whispering or gossiping in sick-rooms managed by Alice; but there was tenderness and firmness too. If naughty children or obstinate old men would not take their physic, Alice was usually sent for, and somehow always succeeded, either by persuasion or command, in inducing obedience.

Ellen was soon restored to her own home in renovated health; and very pleasant was the sunshine, the blaze of the fire, or light of the candle, to eyes from which they had been hidden for some days. Bertha was not only penitent, but very sedate. The anxiety and grief of her parents, and their tender reproofs, had made a lasting impression upon her; nor had she forgotten the rector's lecture.

Edward and John were coming on very well in their holiday work with papa. They had advanced in the knowledge of their own country, had solved various questions in arithmetic, and had acquired a little experience in the use of carpenter's tools. Mr. Beverly knew very well that the art of driving in or knocking out a nail was useful at times to every man, for personal security may depend upon such knowledge. Then he insisted they should learn to saddle

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and bridle a horse, as well as to put him into a gig; for a man's life depends often upon the carefulness of his groom. They could both of them ride and drive well; for he wished them to be manly, and capable of doing everything for themselves. Upon the whole, the boys were enjoying themselves with the very quiet holidays which Ellen's recent danger and the hard weather obliged them to keep. When they got tired of their own pond, they resolved to venture upon a much larger piece of water lying by the side of an unfrequented road, about two miles from their father's grounds. He was going out for the day with Constance and Ellen, and they easily coaxed mamma out of a whole holiday. They wanted Bertha's company, but she had taken cold, and was not allowed to go into the frosty air. Bertha, till her indisposition occurred, had conducted herself with singular discretion, for Ellen's accident had tamed her very much; but she felt herself quite well enough to go abroad, and could not consider that Mr. Lancet had any right to keep her indoors. So she had been saucy enough to give him a broken chair, and to ask him to mend the fractured elbow, expressing herself astonished that he could not.

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The surgeon, a very formal personage, thought her very rude and pert, though he said nothing. Mamma apologized for her little girl's ill-breeding, and hoped Mr. Lancet would regard it as proceeding rather from thoughtlessness than as an intended affront to himself. Mr. Lancet, however, was affronted, and considered Miss Bertha a very intractable and troublesome patient indeed.

We must now return to our boys, who had marched off to the forbidden pond; for mamma had stipulated that they should not leave the grounds. Unfortunately for themselves, they did not think so much of maternal as of paternal government, and both, I am sorry to say, marched off with the wise intention of being their own masters, for that day at least. Mamma they thought was only afraid of their being drowned, but they would take good care of themselves; as indeed they always did. On their way they stopped to look at a pigsty, in which they saw nestled warmly in the straw a sow with a litter of ten tiny pigs. Now, these little creatures, being clean, looked very pretty with their soft silky-looking coats and pink skins.

Our boys admired them very much, and thought they could not be more than two days

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old, and that it was very cold for them. After a time, Edward peeped into the cottage window; no one was there, and then—I know not how such an idea could come into his head, but selfish, mischievous boys seldom consider the consequences of unlawful actions to themselves or others—he told John that they might have some fine fun with the sow, if they could get her upon the pond.*

Unfortunately, a sheet was hanging out to dry on the hedge, which, not being yet frozen, could be used as a sort of net till they had secured and mastered the poor beast, and attached a strong piece of whipcord to one of her hind legs. The sow made a great outcry, and so did the little ones she was compelled to leave to cold and hunger; but there were none to hear them but their tormentors. The boys then drove her forward, and shouting with laughter succeeded in launching her upon the piece of water. The sow, unused to gymnastics on the ice, slid about awkwardly enough, tried to bite, and squeaked and grunted at every turn she was compelled to make. This was fine sport to them; why should it not be so to her? And they had been pursuing this gentlemanly amusement for several hours,

* Fact.

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when they heard themselves addressed in no measured tones of indignation by a farmer on his way to market, who ordered them to release the poor beast, or they would worry her to death.

"You call yourselves gentlemen, perhaps; but to take a widow's sow from her litter and use her so, when the poor beast has pigged so lately, is the lowest action I ever saw in my life, and if my mare were not so gay, I would horsewhip you both."

Not a word could John or Edward say in excuse. They were not hard-hearted, and the mention of a poor widow awakened the better feelings of their natures. Silently they unfastened the string that confined their victim, who seemed much the worse for her slide. They began to be alarmed at the consequences that were not unlikely to follow their cruel frolic, as the poor beast did not appear capable of getting on by herself; so they were compelled to help her off the ice, and by supporting her on each side, to get her into her sty, to rejoin her crying and hungry progeny. She lay down, seemingly unconscious of their wants and her maternal feelings towards them. Our sliders could not mistake this insensibility; they saw that what the farmer had said was true,—they had worried the animal to death. The door of the lonely

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cottage was, however, still locked; no one was in sight. They did not know the farmer, who evidently was unacquainted with them, so they sneaked off and left the poor beast to her fate, resolving to keep close to their own grounds for some days at least. As a troubled conscience is the worst of bosom friends, our culprits could not be easy till they had told Bertha their misadventure; but she had a tender heart, and wondered how they could take the mother from her little ones in such cold weather: indeed, her feminine sympathies were entirely with the tormented, not with the tormentors, though she hoped the sow would get over her sufferings, and offered to walk with them to see how the poor beast was, which offer, however, they thought it prudent to decline.

All uncertainty was soon over respecting the result of their day's sport on the ice, as they heard the housemaid telling their mamma of the misfortune that had befallen poor Widow Taylor in the loss of her sow and pigs. Mamma had laid it upon the severe weather, and expressed her intention of sending some relief when she heard that the widow had lost, with the sow and her litter, her whole maintenance.

The boys felt very miserable; they had not

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wished to injure the widow or destroy her property, but, strange to say, the idea of restitution had not occurred to either of them, although a law suggested by natural justice and enforced by divine authority. Time, however, did his work in deadening painful impressions; the arrival of several handsome presents from aunts and godmothers raised their spirits, and they had almost forgotten Widow Taylor and her sow, when one morning at breakfast an odd-looking little letter was delivered by the footman to his master, with the intimation that the poor woman who brought it was waiting for an answer. At first, the ceremonious delivery on a silver waiter of such a note inclined the young party to smile, especially as it was closed with half a dozen red wafers, which had evidently been impressed with the top of a huge thimble.

"I suppose it is a petition, Robert, you have brought me," remarked Mr. Beverly. "Who is the poor woman—do you know her?"

"Only by sight, sir. It is Widow Taylor, the poor woman to whom my mistress sent five shillings last week. It's about her sow, sir—but I don't think it's a petition."

Bertha stole a look at her brothers, who coloured and hung down their heads. Robert's

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solemn manner alone would have convinced them that the affair had come out, even if the note had remained unopened, and they attempted to make a precipitate retreat. But the note by this time, in its homely truthfulness, had told the secret of the poor widow's wrongs, and Mr. Beverly, not choosing to condemn them unheard, bade them remain, and, putting the note in their hands, told them to read the accusation he had received respecting them.

"It is all quite true, papa," replied Edward. "We did not intend to kill the poor woman's sow, or cause the deaths of the pretty little pigs; we only meant to have a little fun with the beast on the ice. Indeed we know we have deserved punishment, and if we could undo our bad morning's work, we should be very glad. Bertha can tell you how miserable we have been ever since we did the mischief." Edward now began to cry, John was in tears also, while Mrs. Beverly and her daughters seemed much distressed.

"I am glad to see that you are penitent, and have told no untruths about this really disgraceful business," remarked Mr. Beverly; "yet what right had you to teaze and worry a poor beast for your amusement? You cannot bring

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her and her litter back to life; but you can pay three pounds ten shillings to the widow, which she states to be the value of her property."

"I am afraid, papa, we are not worth a quarter of that sum," replied Edward; but he and John poured the contents of their purses on the table, their example being followed by their kind sisters.

"No, girls; I cannot suffer you to assist your brothers in this business: they must pay for their own wanton mischief," said Mr. Beverly, pocketing the money his boys had placed at his disposal. "I will advance the balance of the sum due to the poor widow, as a loan to these naughty boys, who must repay me both principal and interest, by instalments. I shall stop their weekly allowance for that purpose, and may perhaps permit them to work out a part by giving them employment, and paying them for what they do."

"Thank you, dear, dear papa, for helping us out of our terrible scrape," replied both the boys.

"You are not aware of what I am doing for you both, for in making up the matter in this manner I save you from public disgrace and a gaol; for if the widow were disposed to summon you before a magistrate, and you were fined, and

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had no money, you would be sent to prison. However, do not let the lesson be lost upon you, and never do that to the property of another that you would not like to have done to your own. A merciful man is merciful to his beast. The benevolence of the Creator has provided wise laws for the protection of the animal creation, and has commanded restitution to be made to their owners for any injury done to them. May the uneasiness, the shame, the poverty, your wanton mischief has entailed upon you lead you to give over such courses for the future."

Our boys promised amendment; nor did they soon forget their fault when they felt its consequences every day. You might have guessed their poverty by their careful looks. Half a year's privation of pocket-money for half a day's mischief! Surely this was heavy payment for amusement of such a low caste. To tell the truth, our heroes did not feel happy if a pig crossed their path. Then mamma had told Constance and Ellen to lay by the purses they were netting for their brothers, as they would be of no use to them this holiday-time. They had never been without money before in their lives, and they felt the want of it very much.

A travelling menagerie of wild beasts came to

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the village, the sight of which would have gratified them very much. There was a lioness and her cubs, and the cubs were as playful as kittens; and a royal Bengal tigress who could jump through a hoop: there were also monkeys of various kinds well versed in curious tricks, and parrots from many lands. They could hear the showman enumerate the perfections of his animals every day, a tantalizing circumstance that added to the privation they endured. They entreated mamma to take them, but papa would not suffer her to indulge them, reminding her that he had advanced a large sum for her sons, and must be repaid.

Bertha nursed the lion cubs, kissed them, and enticed them to play with her just like her own kittens; and the animated details given by her to her brothers of the menagerie and her tricks with the cubs made our penniless boys bitterly lament the folly that had deprived them of the amusement so much relished by their favourite sister.

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CHAPTER VI.

A Common Mistake refuted.—The Luxuries of the Rich beneficial to the Working Classes.—Division of Labour the Source of Wealth.—Origin of Money.—First mentioned in Genesis.—Barter and Exchange.—Ermines and most fur-bearing animals of the Weazel kind.—Mamma and the cunning Cobbler's Ferret.—Origin of London.—Trade and Commerce require a Currency.—The word "Money" derived from "Juno Moneta."

CONSTANCE generally read the newspaper to her father while he was instructing her brothers in the art of making artificial flies for the fishing-cabinet they were fitting up under his direction. She was reading an account of a Christmas party in which green peas at a guinea per pint had been provided for the entertainment of the guests. "How extravagant!" she remarked; "and the money would have done so much good if expended in charity to the poor in this severe winter." She looked at her father, but he gave no sign to indicate that he was of her opinion. "Do not you think so, dear papa?"

"No, my dear Constance; if the giver of the entertainment can afford to pay for his green

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peas, I think he has done wisely and well, particularly in this hard season."

"I thought, dear papa, you did not care for things out of season."

"No more I do, Ellen, as far as regards the palate; but if I could find employment for the poor in no other shape, and could afford to have green peas at Christmas, I should have them at my table from charitable motives."

"Charitable motives, papa!" replied both the girls, their surprise overpowering their habitual politeness.

"Yes, my dear children, for the luxuries of the rich provide bread for the industrious classes. Hundreds of gardeners at this very time are gaining a comfortable living by raising vegetables and fruit, in the forcing-houses, for the London market; and the best charity we can dispense is employment for the working classes. I can assure my Constance that if I could afford forcing-houses I would have them. I am having decaying trees felled, wood blocks split and cut up, and other business done, that the honest labourer may earn his wages, and escape the degradation of being on the pauper-list of the parish. I do not want all the work now doing on my home farm this year—some of these things could

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be done at another time; but this is my way of giving relief. I leave to your dear mother that species of charity that women always dispense more judiciously than we can do. She has clothing clubs, soup-kitchens, and schools, for those who want raiment, food, or instruction; and we never interfere or clash. She comes to me for aid when she wants it, and I supply her with means, because I know her to be judicious as well as charitable. But I have not yet done with my dissertation upon extra winter employment. I did not adopt my plan from my own suggestion, but from the great financier and able French minister, the Duke of Sully, who relieved the wants of the neighbouring poor during a time of famine, by pulling down a castle in the winter and rebuilding it in the spring. He did not want to rebuild his castle, but he preferred this method of charity to mere almsgiving; and my own personal experience has convinced me that the great minister was right. At this moment all the gardeners about London are out of work with the exception of those employed in providing for the luxuries of the rich. You will say that the purchasers of these things are not thinking about the good they are doing in buying them; perhaps not, but the gardener is benefited whether his

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wants be considered or not. Those who work, and those who work not, have really been united by Providence by the golden links of a chain that can never be sundered, since neither can exist without the other. In the infancy of a State each person with much toil obtained a scanty living by procuring the necessaries he wanted by his individual labour. He was his own tailor, shoemaker, cook, and gardener. After a time, if he became experter and quicker than his neighbour in one of these things, while his neighbour excelled him in some other, perhaps an agreement was made—one made the clothes while the other laboured in the garden: so the man of the needle worked for the man of the spade, while the man of the spade wrought for him; and both lived better for the exchange, because each gained time by it, and thus one had a coat better made, the other a well-cultivated garden. This state of things is what is called division of labour, and is the source from which, in his very able work, Adam Smith derives his theory of the wealth of nations. He considers that an individual is more benefited by following one calling at which he is expert, than by the practice of several in which he is not equally well skilled."

Constance was not wholly satisfied with Adam

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Smith's definition. She ventured to remind her father that in Canada their relations had made candles, soap, carpets, shoes, in fact every article for home consumption, when they first settled there.

"There was no market in the backwoods at that time, where they could have obtained what they wanted," said papa, "and very little money to procure them if there had been one. They employed their means in paying for clearing the ground and cropping it, operations in which they themselves assisted. After a time they left off making candles, soap, shoes, and clothes, because they could employ their time more profitably in doing something that the uneducated could not do. My dear Constance, you have really confirmed the truth of the great political economist's axiom by your objections."

"Papa," said Ellen, "if you think as he does, why are you having two fisher-boys taught gardening when the weather will not let them go to sea?"

"My dear child, almost every rule has its exception. If the weather were always fine I should not wish to give these boys another calling; but that is a bad trade for a lad the practice of which depends upon the winds. Now,

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even garden work has much to do with weather, and as I have nothing in the garden for them to do, I am employing them in splitting wood, at which they are by no means expert as yet; but they are young and willing, and youth and willingness soon overcome obstacles. Indeed, Ellen, I am of opinion that fishermen and weavers should have more trades than one."

"I wonder, papa, how money first came into use," remarked Edward. "I am reading 'Robinson Crusoe,' and have just come to that part of the story where he finds his gold of no value to him; and that made me consider how strange it was that pieces of shining metal should be worth so much, or that they should have been used to buy things with at all."

"Convenience is the real origin of a currency in any nation, whether the medium be gold, silver, copper, shells, salt, iron, or any portable article of standard value," replied Mr. Beverly. "Suppose, for instance, I want a suit of clothes, and the currency was unknown. You know what I mean by the currency?"

"Yes, papa, the coin of the realm in general use, and bank-notes."

"Exactly so. Well, if there were no money I must send produce, which would be very incon-

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venient to my tailor and myself—hay and corn, which he would have to exchange again with the clothier for cloth, the needle-maker for needles, and so on."

"How very droll," remarked Bertha. "I am sure I am very glad there is such a thing as money, or what a trouble there would be in getting even a pair of gloves."

"Wherever money takes the place of barter—that is, the exchange of commodities," continued Mr. Beverly, "that nation, tribe, or people has emerged from savage life and entered that of civilization. The Zulu Caffirs have already learned the difference between a florin and a half-crown piece, for they say 'the last has a sixpence within it;' therefore they have taken an important lesson in civilized life. I think the first mention of money being used, for the purchase of land, is made in the Book of Genesis, in the transaction between Abraham and Ephron the Hittite, for the field and cave of Machpelah, which the patriarch purchased for the sepulchre of Sarah for four hundred shekels of silver;* but, no doubt, a currency existed at a much earlier period of time."

"Papa," said Bertha, "people can deal with-

Genesis xxiii. 13.

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out money, for I saw twenty bear-skins, and some dear pretty ermines that could have been stuffed, for they had black noses and tails, and black marks round the places where their eyes had been, and the sailors had got them all from the Kamschatdales for two blue cloth caps and some old iron hoops. Was not that a bargain, now? The iron, I dare say, was to tip their arrows and lances. How I wish I had a dear live ermine to pet; but we have none in England."

"Yes, Bertha, we have; but they are rare, though I have seen them wild both in England and France. I remember seeing an ermine running on the frozen snow, in just such a winter as this, in the year and month in which you were born. It is a species of weazel that, in hard winters, changes its ordinary colour of a reddish brown to a pure white. It was anciently called *vair*, as it still is in France; but the country people call it, in this part of England, a lobster, on account of its changing its colour in hard winters."

"Oh, papa, then I have seen it often in the summer, and it is a pretty creature; only I did not think my ermines had been a kind of weazel."

"Almost all the beautiful furs worn by ladies are classed under the same head as weazels (*Mus-*

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tella), and are beasts of prey, feeding on game birds or mice. No fur is so warm, beautiful, or valuable as that furnished by these small animals. I think you would not like a pet ermine—its habits would not please you, for it sucks the blood of its prey; and you know how you cried when the ferret you were caressing suddenly fastened on your poor little hand, and the trouble I had to make it loose its hold."

"The man told me it was tame," replied Bertha.

"So I believe it was; but you had scratched your hand, and the sight of the blood awoke the original propensity of its nature: its appetite for living prey had only been subdued, not eradicated."

Mamma remembered something amusing that had happened to herself when she was a little girl. On her way with her nurse to day-school, she used to stop to look at a ferret kept by a cobbler in a latticed box—it was a Spanish ferret, white, or rather primrose colour, with red eyes and a pink nose. "The man used to take it out and hold it while I coaxed it," said mamma; "and, as it was fed on bread and milk, it was very tame. I had always some fruit in my bag for my little friends at school, and, not knowing

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the habits of the ferret, I used to offer him sometimes plums, or pears and apricots, which he never eat, of course; though the cunning cobbler always took care of them for him, for *he* could devour them if his ferret could not. I believe my nurse was as ignorant as myself of the deceit practised by the cobbler. I used to ask every day for my adopted pet in my childish way. Upon which his owner always asked me if I had brought anything for the ferret; and if I had forgotten to do so he refused to open the box. On one of these occasions, I was so much disappointed that I cried a good deal. My governess, noticing the redness of my eyes, inquired the cause, and quickly undeceived me by assuring me that ferrets never ate plums or apricots, but that I had in my ignorance of natural history been providing the cunning cobbler with a dessert every day."

The children laughed heartily at this story, which amused them very much. Constance then reminded papa that though they had been led away by Bertha's account of the purchases made by the sailors at Kamschatka, she had intended to ask him if the ancient Britons were acquainted with the use of money.

"There is reason to believe that they were,"

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replied Mr. Beverly, who added that he had even seen several ancient British coins which if genuine would decide the question. These, however, might be forgeries; but as the Britons carried on an extensive trade with the Tyrian merchants, they were no doubt acquainted with money, even if they had no mint of their own.

"What did the Tyrians get from Britain?" asked John.

"Tin baskets and pearls, for which they received in return iron, wheat, clothing, and money, for the Tyrians hired the great tin-mine in Cornwall, which they worked long before the landing of Julius Cæsar in Britain. The Britons were not sufficiently aware of their own commercial advantages. They did not then combine the character of the warrior with that of the merchant, and could not have foreseen that one day their country would acquire and deserve the name of the modern Tyre. A company of Gallic merchants, in the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius, first discovered in the site of London a spot favourable for an emporium of trade, and the greatest city in the world owes its existence to commerce. Trade, of course, requires a currency, and the gradual subjection of the country to the Romans established that used by the

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conquerors. The word 'money' had a curious derivation, being so called from the Roman mint being situated in the temple of Juno Moneta, from whence our currency is called money."

It was in this manner that Mr. Beverly expanded the minds of his children by giving them useful lessons upon plain things and every-day occurrences.

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CHAPTER VII.

Sea-side Rambles. — Treasures. — Alcyonites. — Amber. — Arenaria. — Its uses in binding down the Sands. — Its protection by Parliament. — Whiting Fishing. — Old Jonas. — Return of the Party with good appetites for Dinner. — Edward's improved behaviour at Table.

THE severe weather was gone, the dismal prospect produced by the thaw had vanished before the brisk breeze, and the grass and herbage again looked green. The sight of firm paths and the vicinity of the sea naturally suggested to the minds of our young people a beach ramble. The spring-tides, and late gales too, promised them something more than a pleasant walk,—a collection of bright stones, curious pebbles, corallines, bladder-ferns, and some of the few shells that are found on our eastern coast. As the day was fine, and the party protected by warm wraps and strong shoes, it was arranged that they should take sandwiches and wine-and-water with them, and really make a day's excursion. Mr. Beverly was to walk with them, and they were to call for Alice Malden as they passed the parsonage. The morning was beautiful, and

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the impatience of Edward, John, and Bertha demanded a shorter cut than the road. One would have thought, indeed, they had never seen the sea before, though it was not only visible from their chamber windows, but the sound of the billows had been their earliest lullaby. However, there is nothing more exhilarating than a walk on the beach, or even the anticipation of filling a basket with weeds and shells. Alice was young enough to enter into the pleasure of her more juvenile friends, and old enough to enjoy the conversation of their accomplished father.

Bertha, always the quickest discoverer of these childish treasures, soon filled her basket with a variety of sea-side waifs and strays,—"sea pincushions," black as jet, as the sailors call the curious cases which once contained the embryo skates; the beautiful palmated coralline, with its sweet smell; lovely confervæs—some ruby bright, others pink, green, or buff; the black bladder-ferns or kelp, used in making glass; whelks of two kinds, one tenanted by the hermit crab, who lived securely in his pretty house till stranded by the retiring tide and seized by Bertha. Then she had amassed a quantity of pretty pink and blue bivalve shells, and had found a whole bunch of articulated coralline, and also of that feathery

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sort that one would sooner suppose to be hair-like grass than what had lately been an assemblage of living creatures. But, besides these treasures, Bertha met with some she had never seen before, in several round pink and blue substances that looked like flesh, but though cold to the touch were possessed, she thought, both of life and motion. She ran to papa to show him these curious things, and to ask him what they were.

"Sea-anemones, or alcyonites: their first name is derived from their resemblance to those beautiful flowers. Some of these zoophytes, or animal flowers, have a branched stem, but these you see have not," replied Mr. Beverly.

"Like anemones, these ugly oval masses of pink and blue flesh!" remarked Bertha, looking contemptuously at her prizes. "I am sure they do not deserve the name."

"Wait till we have put them into a glass of sea-water, my dear. I wish my little girl was less precipitate in forming and expressing her opinions."

He then gave a sailor-boy a trifle to take a bucket of sea-water to the hall with the sea-anemones, of which Bertha seemed now a little afraid. Indeed, we must not blame her for

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this, as she had suffered the preceding summer from incautiously touching the beautiful but treacherous stinging ray, that looks like a coral star set in clear crystal, lovely to look upon but dangerous to handle.

In the meantime, Constance had found a large piece of amber, very clear and the colour of a topaz. Ellen was the fortunate possessor of several cornelians, and a small piece of fat-amber, which, though not so pretty, had a finer perfume and greater powers of attraction than the more precious kind.

Alice had discovered in the sand-reed, or arenaria, a subject for thought and wonder.

Even Constance was wondering at the interest she expressed for this plant, which to the unlearned in such matters presented nothing attractive.

"Dear Alice, what makes you so pleased with that kind of reed, which is not half so pretty as those that grow in streams and brooks?"

"I am pleased to see it growing here, Constance, because it will protect this part of the coast from the encroachment of the sea. Its strong roots run beneath the sand, interlacing together like a spider's web, and, incredible as it may seem to those who do not know it, form

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a bulwark against the mighty ocean itself. The stones and sand accumulate owing to the obstruction it creates; the dust lodges, and green meadows are formed between the sea and the beach; thus the coast is defended by means so simple and yet so wonderful as the growth of the sand-reed. Whole districts along the flat coast of Norfolk are preserved by its means alone. But, Constance, you do not yet know the dignity of my plant. It is really defended by Act of Parliament, and its destruction is punishable by law."

"Yet, Miss Alice, you have pulled up a piece with some labour," remarked Bertha, laughing, "and have got such a pair of red cheeks; and I seldom have seen you with a colour before."

"I have only gathered a single stem to show my father, who will be pleased to hear that it has made its appearance on this part of the coast; for, humble as it looks to us, we must remember that the great power of God can bring good to man from things as insignificant as this. His works are indeed marvellous, and pass our finding out."

Alice spoke from her very heart; to her this world was no barren waste, for she always found in every plant, or stone, or creature, something

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to admire. Not in vain did she repeat the words, "Let every creature praise the Lord."

John and Edward, less interested in marine treasures than their sisters and their friend, were watching the beach-fishing for whitings and codlings, carried on by boys of their own age, or by old men. They were too expert in the art of throwing out the line attached to the reel to fear catching the hooks in their clothes or flesh, so they soon bargained for the use of the fishing apparatus, papa having agreed to pay the hire for his chance of half the fish. They took their station on each side of old Jonas Hanway, for the pleasure of hearing his yarns, or sea adventures, as well as to benefit by his advice. Jonas had been their instructor in beach-fishing, and he had a long story to tell them about a poor young gentleman who had caught a whole set of hooks that morning in his shoulder, and had had them cut out by the surgeon, and all for want of attention to the directions of old experienced fishermen like himself.

Our boys were very sympathising, far more so than old Jonas; for when learners, but for papa's restrictions, and the advice of this experienced hand, no doubt the same accident would have befallen themselves. Those who have never

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seen beach-fishing, but are expert with the fishing-rod, may perhaps imagine it is performed in the same manner. Such, however, is not the case. A long length of line wound on a wooden reel, which is fastened securely to the beach by means of a pole, comprises the tackle. The string hooks, for there are many attached to the line, are baited with shrimps and pieces of raw cod. The line itself is thrown out with both hands to the length required into the sea; but when it is necessary to take it in, the reel comes into use to wind it up. Edward's and John's first bites proved nothing better than dog-fish; but, though much mortified at merely catching these ferocious creatures, they would not blind them, as old Jonas recommended—a cruel practice only too common among this class. Their next bites proved more fortunate, and a nice dish of whitings was the result of their sport. Mr. Beverly bought some of Jonas, which he sent home for his own late dinner. Our party had not yet had enough of the beach, so they walked along the sands till they came to a hut erected for the accommodation of the coast-guard, which, being provided with benches and a round table, afforded them the means of taking their sandwiches and wine-and-water with comfort. They were sufficiently

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hungry to enjoy their luncheon, and tired enough to raise a joyful cry of surprise upon seeing the game-cart and pair of horses that mamma had considerately sent to convey them all home.

They were to dine together to-day, as Miss Alice was their guest, and Edward and John did ample justice at seven o'clock to their own fish, as well as to the good things mamma had provided for their entertainment. Edward had profited, I am happy to say, by the lesson his favourite hero had afforded him; for he no longer behaved like a selfish epicure by trying to get the best of everything for himself, but practised that self-denial which is so essential for a young gentleman to acquire in his own home before entering into society.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Sea-anemones in Flower. — Remarks on Zoophytes. — Remarkable ones in Barbadoes.—Alcyonites in their Fossil and Gem-like form.—How to make a Marine Herbal. — Corals and Corallines. — Formation of the Islands of the Pacific.—Beautiful lines by an American lady.

TIRED with their ramble, the young people did not till the following morning re-examine their marine treasures. The elder girls had played duets, and sang with Alice, while Bertha and her brothers had played chess alternately. Mamma had not seen their collection yet, but she had promised to come into the playroom to look at it as soon as it was arranged in due order. A cry of delight from Bertha, and then the sight of her merry face and entreaty to come at once to see something so pretty and wonderful, induced both her parents to hasten to the room where the exhibition was to take place. The sea-anemones, no longer looking like dull masses of red and blue, had put forth their tentaculæ, or feelers, in search of food—minute animalculæ, invisible to eyeless zoophytes like themselves, and only perceptible

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to man by the aid of science and the microscope. These feelers, when the creatures of which they formed a part rose to the surface of the sea-water in which they had been immersed, took the form of rays, not unlike the multitudinous tiny petals into which the anthers of the anemone have been transformed by cultivation, and which constitute its beauty as a double flower. These glorious living rays of a cerulean blue in one specimen, and rose-colour in the other, filled the whole party with admiration and wonder. Mr. Beverly quickly effected a change in their appearance by lightly touching a ray of each with his silver pencil-case, when they all contracted, and the creatures instantly resumed their former appearance.

"Ah, what a pity that such pretty things should make themselves ugly as soon as they are touched. Why do they make themselves into flowers? Is it because they like to look beautiful sometimes?" asked Bertha, bending anxiously over the glass that contained her treasures.

"I really believe, my dear Bertha, that your zoophytes are incapable of personal vanity. When they throw out their beautiful rays, they are merely getting their living. They have no eyes, but they have a stomach, and of course an appetite, which the use of these feelers enables

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them to satisfy — each terminating in a sort of hook which grasps the prey it catches, and bends a strong muscle towards the oval orifice, which serves the double purpose of a mouth and stomach, and is ready to receive the food. These feelers could not supply the animal without being possessed of intense sensibility, as they must choose the proper aliment, and reject what would be deleterious to it. Even the beautiful form this zoophyte assumes may be one of its means of attracting its living prey. As even zoophytes cannot be always eating, you will see your anemones withdraw their tentaculæ, or feelers, as soon as they have satisfied their hunger."

Bertha watched them for some time, and beheld each ray contract separately, till only a little prominence denoted the place they had occupied. Mr. Beverly told her of other zoophytes, such as the Mantes, or creeping leaf of South America, and the Barbadoes flower, of which she would find an account in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," under the article "Animal Flower."

Constance found it out readily, like a young lady who acted frequently the part of librarian to her papa, who then proceeded to read to the assembled group the following section :—

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"In Hughes's 'Natural History of Barbadoes' there is an account of a remarkable species of animal flower found in a basin in a cave, of which he gives the following description:—

"'In the middle of the basin there is a rocky stone which is firmly fixed in the water; round its sides, at different depths, but seldom exceeding eighteen inches, are seen, at all times of the year, issuing out of little holes certain substances that have the appearance of fine radiated flowers of a pale yellow or bright straw colour, slightly tinged with green, having a circular border of thick-set petals about the size of and much resembling the single garden marigold, except that this seeming flower is narrower at the discus, or setting on of the flower, than any flower of the kind. I have attempted to pluck one of these from the rock to which they are always attached, but never could effect it; for as soon as my fingers came within two or three inches of it, the flower would immediately contract close to its yellow border, and shrink back into the hole in the rock. If left undisturbed for five minutes, it would come gradually into sight, expanding, though very cautiously, its seeming petals till it came gradually into bloom. It would, however, recoil with surprising quickness

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if touched with my cane. Though I could not pluck one of these seeming flowers, I contrived, by holding a knife cautiously, to cut two out of the mouth of one of the holes where they appeared; these, though they retained their form and colour out of water, soon shrivelled and decayed, being composed of a membrane-like substance surprisingly thin.' "

The Barbadoes flower, according to the writer, possessed a wonderful reproductive power, shared also with sea-anemones and other polypi, for if they are broken or divided each part becomes an individual of the same species.

"Then I can make some more sea-anemones—as many indeed as I like?" remarked Bertha, eagerly.

"No, my dear, I do not wish you to be either cruel or unfeminine; and, though the amount of pain experienced by zoophytes may be small, I doubt whether we should be justified in inflicting it. I will, however, show you these creatures under their fossil form."

Mr. Beverly quitted the room, and quickly returned with two specimens in his hand: one was a black flint, cut open and finely polished, containing an alcyonite, though of a buffish colour, showing the interior of the crea-

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ture transformed into a hard substance like alabaster, only infinitely finer grained. But if this was curious and wonderful, Bertha screamed with delight when she discovered in the brilliant transparent gem-like substance her father unrolled from some unspun cotton, a real alcyonite of a palish pinky-red; not indeed so large or lumpy as her own, but sufficiently marked to be recognized as of the same species. How many ages had passed away before the alcyonites had assumed this fossil and gem-like form, none but the Framer of these wonders could know.

"I wonder, papa, you did not have it set in a brooch for mamma," said Ellen, who, notwithstanding her constitutionally quiet temper, was fond of ornament.

"Your mamma likes to see it in its present form—she has more admiration for nature than for gewgaws; and to please her I have had one side of this beautiful alcyonite left in its rough state. She has a cultivated mind, capable of appreciating the wonderful works of God, and that faculty has made her company always agreeable as well as instructive to me."

Constance now exhibited her corallines and confervæ—lovely specimens she had gathered up for her father's marine herbal. For though the

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corallines had once been living zoophytes, before the stormy winds had torn them from their native rocks, and therefore could not be plants, they made a pretty variety in the book.

If my young friends in visiting the sea-side wish to have a pretty memorial of time spent in the pursuit of rational pleasure or health, they cannot do better than bring back with them a "marine herbal." The specimens do not lose their natural colours or shrivel like a "flower herbal," although that is a nice useful thing.

The materials needed for preserving the specimens are merely a quire of strong cartridge-paper and some gum arabic. Cut your sheets to the size you require, and split each sheet into two pages; dissolve a little gum in a large basin of water; wash each specimen carefully in water, to get rid of the salt and sand, then lay it in the basin that has the gum-water, and put the sheet of cartridge-paper cornerwise between the water and the specimen. Move the paper gently, till the specimen is spread out upon it in the place you wish it to occupy; if any part of the weed is doubled, make use of the agency of the water again, but if you cannot float it till it takes its natural form, a pin may be used. As soon as it is in nice order, lay it out to dry. When completely free from damp,

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place your sheet, with one to cover it, between two pieces of smooth deal board of the size you wish your book to be. You may keep adding to the herbal, but your boards will contain the amount till enough for a volume is got ready, when it may be bound in any way you please. As some of the algæ are large, the volume should be of a folio size if you wish to include them in your herbal.

Mr. Beverly had a beautiful book of this kind in hand, but divided according to botanical arrangement; each plant being properly classed and named. The corallines were also arranged according to their species. In making a book of this kind, the young naturalist must either leave a blank for the names of the marine plants or corallines, or by patient study learn to class them himself, unless some scientific friend will kindly furnish him with the needful knowledge.

"Are these corallines the same species of creature as corals, papa?" asked Constance, while fixing a specimen of palmated coralline to a sheet of paper.

"There is a difference between them, Constance; for though both are zoophytes of the polypus kind, the cell of the coralline is of a horny nature, while that of the coral is of a stony

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substance. This articulated coralline, indeed, resembles so much the true coral in its calcareous structure, that it seems to form a link between the two divisions into which naturalists have separated them. Come into my study and examine with me some beautiful specimens of corals, from several parts of the world, both in their natural and polished state."

It was a great treat for our young people to be permitted to enter papa's *sanctum*, and see only one of his cabinets unlocked. The sight of white, red, and the rare pink Neapolitan coral, and also the equally precious scarlet species from Japan, was delightful to them; but when he showed them a polished medallion of pink coral, with a tiny poodle dog carved, curls and all, out of white coral, and fitted up with jet eyes, their admiration at this cameo was intense.—Could the materials of this gem belong to the animal kingdom? Yes; science had solved the problem long ago, but still the wonder was not lessened.

"The coral polypus exudes from its own body the milky juice which forms its cell, and hardens into a substance resembling stone. Each of these holes in this piece of branched white coral formerly contained a living creature, the growth

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of the plant-like branches being only the multiplication of the colony which increases in that form. Coral is often found in a fossil state; more particularly in Suffolk, near Orford. But I have another species of stone to show you, formed somewhat in the same way. Here is a specimen of Madrepora pleiades;" and Mr. Beverly displayed an oval mass, full of stars groined into the substance, resembling lace stars cut in stone by the hand of some expert carver. The difference between madrepora and coral is more in form than nature; for madrepora never branches. It is common enough in South America to be used for building and paving purposes."

"But are not many islands formed by the growth of the coral insect, papa, in the Pacific," asked Ellen—"beautiful islands, and also dangerous reefs?"

"They are not the first agent in the formation of either, my dear girl, for the rocks to which they attach themselves are of volcanic origin; but the lagoon of sweet, clear water with which every island, however small, is furnished, is supposed to be derived from them. Here is Dr. Lyell's account of the agency of the coral insect in his work:—'The coral insect builds in a circular direction,

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so that a basin or hollow is left in the centre of the reef: this is the future lagoon, and it is supposed they have a property of depriving the sea-water of its saltness, as these reservoirs contain fresh water.' You may be sure, my dear children," remarked Mr. Beverly, "that God, who designed the embryo island for the habitation of man, would supply it with an element so essential to life as pure water, and therefore He has given the coral insect this wonderful power. Well, the coral continues to increase on every side, growing—if it be proper to use that term—to an immense height, rising many fathoms in the water, till the increase of light disturbs its operations, and being exposed to storms and currents, it dies off and decays. The branches afford lodgment to weeds and shells; the winds bring the seeds of plants; birds find a resting-place thereon, and prepare the growing island for trees; the waves waft thither the cocoa-nut, and verdure clothes the new-formed land, which soon becomes fit for the habitation of man. The deep lagoon* is

* Supposed to be the crater of the extinct submarine volcano, round which the coral has first fixed its abode, but this only accounts for the depth of the lagoon. The sweetness of the water must be referred to the polypi.

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never dry, and while the sea finds him in fish, the cocoa palm affords him bread, tackle, and a bed. Such is the history of the small islands of the Pacific, which I have simplified for your amusement and instruction."

"But, papa, has any person really seen the formation of land in this wonderful manner?" inquired Ellen, earnestly.

"Yes; navigators have seen what I have just described, in various stages, from the living coral reef, distinctly visible at an immense depth in the clear water of the Pacific, to the point where it dies off, and its branches detain weeds and collect dust, to form the embryo island, to the period when it becomes solid land, clad with the vegetation and trees which spring up so rapidly in tropical climates. In the voyages and maritime discoveries of Captains Flinders, Kotzebue, and others, you may read, Ellen, the testimony afforded by intelligent witnesses to this interesting fact."

Mamma remembered some charming lines on the coral insect by Mrs. Sigourney, an accomplished American lady. For though, strictly speaking, these creatures do not build, yet they originated the structures that formed the subject of her poem.

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THE CORAL INSECT.

Toil on, toil on—toil on, ye ephemeral train,
Who build in the tossing and treacherous main;
Toil on, for the wisdom of man ye mock
With your sand-based structures and domes of rock;
Your columns the fathomless fountains lave,
And your arches spring up to the crested wave.
Ye're a puny race thus boldly to rear
A fabric so vast in a realm so drear.

Ye bind the deep with your secret zone,
The ocean is seal'd and the surge a stone;
Fresh wreaths from the coral pavement spring,
Like the terraced pride of Assyria's king;
The turf looks green where the breakers roll'd,
O'er the whirlpool ripens the rind of gold;
The sea-snatch'd isle is the home of men,
And the mountains exult where the wave has been.

But why do ye plant, midst the billows dark,
The wrecking reef for the foundering bark?
There are snares enough in the tented field,
'Mid the blossom'd sweets that the valleys yield;
There are serpents to coil ere the flowers are up,
There's a poison-drop in man's purest cup,
There are foes that watch for his cradle breath;
Then why need ye sow the floods with death?

With mouldering bones the deeps are white,
From the ice-clad pole to the tropics bright;
The mermaid has twisted her fingers cold
With the mesh of the sea-boy's curls of gold;

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And the gods of ocean have frown'd to see
The mariner's bed in their halls of glee.
Hath earth no graves, that ye thus must spread
The boundless sea for the thronging dead ?

Ye build—ye build, but ye enter not in ;
Like the tribes whom the desert devour'd in their sin,
From the land of promise ye fade and die,
Ere its verdure gleams forth on your weary eye :
As the kings of the cloud-capp'd pyramid
Their noteless bones in oblivion hid,
Ye slumber unmark'd by the desolate main,
While the wonder and pride of your works remain.

With these exquisite lines, the morning lecture ended ; amber and jet, the only unnoticed produce of the sea-side ramble, being reserved for the evening's entertainment.

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CHAPTER IX.

The Birthday Gift.—Amber: its origin; its uses.—The wonderful Amber Brooch.—Electric properties of Amber: its medicinal uses; how to cut and polish it.—Jet.—Coal of vegetable origin.

"You promised to tell us something about amber and its properties, dear papa," said Constance, as the party were enjoying their dessert after dinner.

"I have not forgotten it, my dear," replied Mr. Beverly, "nor that to-day is your fifteenth birthday." He then took a small case from a side table and presented it to her, saying, "Do not open it, love, till we have discussed amber and its peculiar properties."

Constance, though she did really long to see what papa had given her, was too obedient and well bred to infringe his commands.

The boys and Bertha whispered that they could see and tell her, as no mention had been made about what they might do; but Constance shook her head, while Ellen said "that would be just as bad as if Constance had opened it;" and

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so the mystery remained unravelled till the proper time was come. Papa then took from a cabinet specimens of clear, clouded, and fat amber, and asked his attentive auditors to guess what they had been.

Constance thought she had seen something very like the two first specimens upon an old cherry-tree. Fat amber, indeed, was not without its resemblance to a lump of resin.

"Well, my dear girl, there is every reason to believe, with Pliny, the Roman naturalist, that amber has been a resinous gum. It is now only found in a fossil state, in the earth, in Poland, Prussia, and some other places in Germany; though it has been discovered in clay pits near London, and is not uncommon on the shores of the Baltic or our own coasts. Besides its strong resinous perfume when burned or rubbed, it often incloses flies, ants, light particles of straw, or twigs."

"Flies and ants, papa!" exclaimed Constance, in great surprise.

"Open that case, my dear, and look at your birthday gift," replied Mr. Beverly, "and see with your own eyes."

Constance obeyed with great alacrity, and held up, admiringly, a large amber brooch,

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elegantly set in gold, and clear and brilliant as a topaz, having in the centre a perfect ant of the yellow kind,* as well defined as if it had been a creature of yesterday, instead of having been entombed in its beautiful sepulchre for unknown ages. Four pairs of curious eyes and outstretched hands disputed with its lawful owner the possession and sight of this wonder. Papa, however, decided that each of these importunate persons should see it in the order of seniority, on condition they handled it with the care required by young ladies while showing their ornaments.

Constance was delighted, you may be sure, for though amber brooches are always pretty, few can be found with an ant enclosed within the amber; and, till the holidays were over, this curious ornament was always in requisition. "Pray, Con., wear your ant-brooch to-day," was a diurnal demand made by Edward, John, and Bertha, as well as by other inquiring friends.

After tranquillity had been restored, papa told his auditors that amber had a wonderful property of attracting light substances, when rubbed for a short time with the hand or a piece of cloth, and that it had been given the name of

* Fact.

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electrum by the ancients from this circumstance, whence our well-known words electric and electricity were derived. *Ambra,* being the Arabic name for this beautiful fossil gum, had been slightly altered into *amber.* Of course, there was a trial instantly made of the attracting powers of amber by the young people; nor were they less interested in the fine odour given out by the article when rubbed; the fat amber, as we have already observed, if less beautiful to the eye, possesses more electric power and gives forth a finer perfume than the clear or clouded kinds. Papa told them that every sort was used for varnishes and medicine, though fat amber was still reckoned the best for such purposes. He thought he need not say how beautiful the other kinds of amber were for ornaments, as ladies were good judges of beads, bracelets, hearts, and crosses; he had shaped and polished some into hearts himself.

Edward wished to know how this could be effected; and when he heard that emery was used to reduce the roughness of the specimen, and that it could be shaped with a knife and polished with a piece of glass, he determined to make the experiment himself. "I wish, papa, you would cut and polish these large pieces you have just

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shown us. You have enough to make snuff-boxes, brooches, and all sorts of pretty things."

"But you forget that, to a naturalist, Edward, any specimen in its primitive state is more valuable than when polished, although it may not be so beautiful."

Constance, upon hearing this, offered her father the fine clear piece she had found on the beach the day before, and was much pleased by his acceptance of it.

Ellen reminded papa that he had said amber was used medicinally.

"Yes, my dear, oil of amber is used in cases of intermittent and remittent fevers, and I have seen some cures effected by it when taken for the ague in the form of drops. Quinine, no doubt, has superseded this costly remedy; but amber is an elegant bitter, and not so unpleasant to take. It has been said that amber, when well rubbed, becomes luminous in the dark, but I have never seen a specimen that will do so, though it is not impossible that some may possess this quality. Jet has several properties resembling amber, and, like it, may be of vegetable origin. Cannel coal is often mistaken for jet; but, though black and shining, it is very brittle, while jet is hard, and closer grained."

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"Is it possible that any kind of coal can be of vegetable origin, dear papa?" asked Constance, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes; the fact cannot reasonably be doubted, since trees, partially converted into this useful substance, have been found in coal-mines; but it is still a mystery in what way the conversion took place. 'God works,' as your favourite hymn says, 'in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.' We may recognize His hand in everything, and adore His wisdom, while acknowledging, with deep humility, that His ways are past finding out."

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CHAPTER X.

Aunt Mary.—Bertha's former Misbehaviour—Her Penitence.—Bertha's Displeasure.—Recrimination reproved by Alice.—Alice a peace-maker.—The Visit to Aunt Mary's Sister.—The Walk over the Glebe Farm with the Rector.—The Church and its Monuments.—The old Ruin.

Towards the middle of January, a very welcome visitor arrived at Selwood Hall, who was known in the family by the familiar appellation of "Aunt Mary." Of course she had a surname, as we all have, and I believe it was Mason; but the young people, whose recollections of her were as early as of their own mother, had adopted her for an aunt because they loved and esteemed her so much. Aunt Mary had been Mrs. Beverly's schoolfellow, though their positions in life were widely different; for the latter was a young lady of independent fortune, while Mary Mason was a pupil-teacher. The amiable qualities of the under-teacher had gained the affections of the more fortunately circumstanced Maria, and so it happened that whenever she required a home she found one in that of her affluent friend. She had also assisted in the early education of that friend's

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children, and indeed loved them as much as if they had been her own. She was greeted with much affection by them all, and even Bertha, whose love had been somewhat shaken by Aunt Mary's persevering instructions to her ungrateful self in the useful art of darning stockings, seemed as glad to see her as the rest. Now, truth to say, Aunt Mary had endured uncomplainingly a species of martyrdom while teaching Bertha to darn, since the refractory pupil, who hated needlework generally, and darning stockings in particular, had provided herself with an unreasonably long piece of cotton, by which means she managed to prick Aunt Mary's arm with the head of her needle every time she drew it out of the stocking. Mamma, who had seen this naughty trick, had punished her little girl. Bertha, who considered herself an injured person, was sullenly vindictive, and declared she never wanted to see Aunt Mary again. Better feelings had succeeded these bad ones. Bertha had remorsefully remembered that Aunt Mary, far from getting her into trouble about the injured arm, had not only been uncomplaining, but had tried to intercede for her with mamma. She was making a pretty netted bag for Aunt Mary, by way of a peace-offering, and as this

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cadeau was nearly finished, she was impatient to see her old friend again. John, who liked to tease Bertha occasionally, continually reminded her of the eccentric method she had taken to vex Aunt Mary during her fit of the pouts. It happened once that when Bertha, Aunt Mary, and the cat were the sole occupants of the sitting-room, his favourite sister had suddenly remarked, "There are three persons in this room, and two I love and one I hate. I don't hate you, poor pussy, and of course I don't hate myself." To which by no means difficult enigma Aunt Mary had meekly replied, "You mean me, I am afraid, Miss Bertha." "You said it yourself, Miss Mason; so you ought not to get me punished for fitting the cap on your own head."

"No, my dear child, for I can easier forgive you than when you are in a better mind you will forgive yourself. However, I shall consider it in the light of rather a rude joke."

Now this was the truth, for though Bertha had at the time told the anecdote herself, she was now not only very sorry and ashamed of her sly naughty behaviour, but was anxious to show how much she loved her dear old friend. And this had made a girl who hated work employ her play-time in making a pretty bag for Aunt Mary. She could not

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stand John's jokes, and wept piteously, till by good luck Miss Alice came in, and asked so kindly about the cause of her grief that Bertha could not keep it from her. Alice dried the child's streaming eyes, while she reproved her tormentor. "John, do you like to have your faults brought to your mind when you are ashamed of them, and mean to amend them?"

"And I have never once told him about sliding with Widow Taylor's sow," said Bertha, reproachfully, raising herself from Alice's kind arms, and fiercely regarding her brother.

"Hush, my darling, you are doing it now. No recriminations are Christianlike. But why is the little nose turned up? that is not the way to cure John of his fault."

"It's all because I am not like you, dear Miss Alice—and I wish I was; but I will try to leave off turning it up,—indeed, I will."

"Well, Bertha, I am very sorry I vexed you so much. I only did it in fun, and you were very kind about Widow Taylor's sow, and would have given me and Edward all your money, only papa would not let us take it; so let us kiss and be friends again." Bertha embraced her brother, and Alice Malden had the pleasure of seeing them on good terms with each other again.

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Aunt Mary arrived that evening, and was fondly welcomed by the whole family, as well as by Alice, who esteemed her as much as they did. She was delighted with Bertha's present; for, somehow, Bertha was her favourite, in spite of her occasional fits of sullenness and perversity.

It had been settled a long while ago that when Aunt Mary visited her sister, the wife of a neighbouring clergyman, who cultivated his own glebe, Alice should drive her and the three young ladies in her father's open carriage, attended by Mr. Beverly's groom on horseback, to the vicarage. As the holidays were nearly over, an early day was fixed, and a fine frosty one it proved to be. Alice was an excellent whip, though Bertha thought her too sparing in the use of it, and occasionally grumbled at the slowness of the steed, who kept his own sure and fast trot, instead of galloping as she wished him to do.

Constance and Ellen enjoyed the prospect, and admired the effect of the rime frost, sometimes chatting with Aunt Mary and Alice, or with each other; while Bertha was peevish, and kept grumbling at the long time they were on the road. The truth was, she had talked half the night about the visit, and was feverish and irri-

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table. However, the longest journey must come to an end, and the party arrived at the vicarage in proper time for luncheon.

Everything was neat and nice, though in a different style from what the young people were accustomed to at home. Their hosts were primitive in manners and elderly in years, and, having no family, managed to live comfortably among their parishioners without show or much expenditure.

No farmer's wife could manage her dairy better, or was prouder of it, than Mrs. Green. Nor was the vicar less proud of his well-stocked farm, and he was pleased to take his visitors over the glebe, and to show them his cattle and barns and stables. Ellen and Constance were amused at the sight of the barn-fan,* an implement very unlike its namesake of the drawing-room and ball-room. There is something very national in a real English farm, with its fields parted by beautiful hedgerows; its well-cultured land and

* The fan, now usually superseded by the use of the dressing machine, will hold between one and two bushels, is made of fine wicker closely woven, and formed in the shape of a cockleshell. The corn is thrown up in it after being thrashed, to separate the chaff from the grain. No one can see it used without recalling the Scriptural allegory, "Whose fan is in his hand."

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neat outbuildings; the cottages of the labourers with nicely kept gardens; and the well-fed and snugly stabled horses. Constance and Ellen quite charmed the vicar by the interest they took in his farm, but their admiration of the village church delighted him still more; for, though small, it was a fine specimen of pure Gothic architecture, and the chancel screen still retained its exquisite tracery and rich colouring. Nor were the painted windows, with their gorgeous hues, less interesting. Stained glass and wood carving in the olden time had obtained for English art in these branches a high reputation, and, however quaint the designs may be, modern windows cannot at present compete with the ancient style as far as colour is concerned. Then the silken banners that hung over the altar, emblazoned with the arms of the extinct family whose remains rested within the sacred edifice which the piety of its general ancestor had raised, seemed strange to their eyes within a church. Upon the renewal of these memorials depended the tenure of several annual gifts to the poor, for thus had human pride provided for posthumous honours under the mask of charity. Nor were the monumental brasses less curious in their details, for thereon might be seen the

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delineation of the deceased wrapped in the winding sheet that was then used for the shroud, tied in a knot on the top of the head, and, after enveloping the form, again tied round the feet. Those in later times, when the custom of lying in state with great pomp was more generally observed, were in the costumes prevalent during the Tudor dynasty—the fardingale and pointed bodice then worn so nearly resembling the fashion of the present times. The later monuments only set forth in Latin the virtues of the deceased. One alone told a tale in English, more likely to touch human feelings; for it commemorated the deaths of the last members of the ancient line in the persons of a brother and sister, who had both died in the flower of their age. He was slain in a sea-fight, and she broke her heart upon the receipt of the news. Alice, Constance, and Ellen were much interested in the gentle Philippa; while Bertha, who was by no means of a romantic turn, was amusing herself with looking at the quaintly carved ceiling, and had discovered in odd nooks some of those curious representations of the *fratres predicanti*, or preaching friars, in which that somewhat unorthodox body are often caricatured by the architects employed by the more orthodox party.

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A curious old ruin on the neighbouring heath, known by the name of "the old chapel," next attracted their attention, after leaving the quiet country churchyard. The vicar supposed it had been a Roman fort, as it bore no resemblance to an ecclesiastical building. It stood on an extensive heath, lonely and ivy-covered, a relic older than Christianity in the island, and founded by the heathen conqueror, not by the peaceful missionary. After some pleasant talk about the ruin the vicar found it was time to proceed homewards, if they wished to dress for dinner, for which, by-the-by, their ramble with him had given them an excellent appetite.

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CHAPTER XI.

Pets and their Uses.—History of Billy the Pet-lamb.—Molly's fondness for him; his Fracas with the old Cat and her Kitten.—How Billy managed to get his own Milk.—Behaviour of the Cockatoo.—Bookwormishness of Constance and Ellen.—Moonlight Deception.—Bertha's nocturnal Adventure.—Conversation with Alice.—Gentlewomen.—Bertha wishes to be saucy.—Cannot be rude to Alice.—Influence of a Christian Character; its good Effects.

Our young party made such a hasty toilette that they had time to bestow some attention upon various objects of interest, which, though not uncommon, were new to them. Girls, we all know, have an extreme fondness for pets of all kinds; a harmless predilection, which under certain regulations may not only be safely indulged in, but will elicit many useful and valuable qualities. Tenderness, forecast, and an easy acquaintance with the natural history of rabbits, cats, dogs, squirrels, dormice, and birds, are the certain results of this tendency. To feed and provide for them ought of course to be inculcated as a duty, nor should the pets be suffered to be troublesome guests in the

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parlour, or take up time appointed for other more important purposes. Constance, Ellen, and Bertha, all loved pets dearly, and the vicarage boasted a great many. There was a beautiful lamb, white as snow, which had been washed the day before that he might be presentable: a loving lamb too, well deserving of his Suffolk appellation of Cossett, who followed the dairymaid everywhere as if she had been his own dam. She certainly merited his affection, for the poor ewe had died in yeaning, and Molly had fed the lamb with warm milk through the spout of a teapot at first, and afterwards with the aid of her finger.* She had kept him near the fire, in a basket lined and covered with pieces of old carpet, and, moreover, had risen more than once in the cold winter nights to feed and cover him with an additional blanket. Billy was a late-fall lamb, an unusual period for these little creatures to come into the world, which had made the task of rearing him so troublesome to the kind dairymaid. Though lambs have been called stupid by people who

* A curious method practised in Suffolk and elsewhere in rearing young animals by hand. The finger is put into the creature's mouth, and his head being lowered to the milk, he sucks the finger and the milk with it.

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know little of their habits, it is certain that when domesticated as pets in a house they display much intelligence. Billy followed his nurse all over the ground floor, and would have ascended the staircase if she had permitted him; then he knew that in a certain cupboard, leading to the sitting-room, biscuit was kept, and here Billy regularly made a stand, and would rap at the door in hopes of obtaining one. Then Molly kept a crust of bread in her pocket for him, and Billy did not hesitate to commit petty larceny, for he never failed to empty it of its eatable contents.

Bertha and her sisters were much amused by the rehearsal of Billy's accomplishments, who promised in time, under Molly's teaching, to arrive at the dignity of a learned lamb. Some milk was given him, it being his feeding time, when a scene was performed in the impromptu style between him and the cat that infinitely amused the whole party. Mrs. Pussy, with her pretty kitten, chose to dispute the possession of the milk with Master Billy, whose nose she scratched while appropriating to her own use his lawful property.

Billy, who dared not attack her, intercepted and butted the kitten, whose cries brought to th

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rescue its feline mother, who licked and comforted it as she was accustomed to do. During this short interval, the lamb was drinking his milk in double-quick time; the cat, however, presently renewed the contest, setting up her back till every hair stood on end, swearing, and spitting in an alarming manner. Cunning Billy again assailed the kitten, when a repetition of the scene took place, and he contrived at last to swallow his own milk.*

The dairymaid, to whom Billy was dear as a son, would have driven away puss and her kitten, but Bertha was too much amused to permit it, though Molly did not like to see her own pet affronted and robbed, and his pretty face scratched. Molly was certainly right. It is supposed that cats, when they inflate their coats, possess electric powers which they exert for self-defence, since dogs and other animals much larger than themselves often retreat upon touching them, without having felt their talons. Our domestic cats, in receiving that species of home education which such animals acquire under man's roof, display an amount of intellect never shown by the same creature in a wild state. The brain is more developed, and the

* Fact.

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animal loses its fierceness and becomes attractive and companionable; and hard indeed must be the heart of that man or boy who can torment, hurt, or kill a creature possessed of so many useful and agreeable qualities.

By this time our young people had a good appetite for dinner, which was plain but hospitable; with the dessert came in an old pet of their hostess, in the shape of a fine lemon-crested cockatoo, who immediately went up to Alice, with whom he was personally acquainted, and asked her how she did, in a very amusing way. He placed himself at once upon Aunt Mary's shoulder, whom he evidently considered as a very old friend, permitting her to rub his head and part his crest with her fingers. Not being fond of strangers, he hopped on one leg, bending his head in a menacing manner, looking very fiercely at Constance and Ellen, who were warned not to touch him. He came readily to his mistress, to whom he uttered many praises of his own beauty, while she was choosing him a pear. He, however, preferred helping himself, and, as might be supposed, chose the best he could find, with which he made off. Now Bertha, who was very fearless, and much addicted to having her own way, would have had her

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fingers broken in the act of touching him, if the vicar had not immediately placed his own upon them, which, instead of the sharp stroke designed for hers, received a tender and loving caress from this discerning creature.*

Constance and Ellen, who were very bookish, had seen several works in the vicar's library which they wanted to read; they were early risers, and in the winter always dressed by candle-light, so they hoped by rising early in the morning to gratify their taste for reading, if the vicar would allow them the use of his study before the family were stirring. He readily consented, and they were promised a good fire, and the maids were directed to call them at an early hour.

Now both Alice and Aunt Mary had objected to this arrangement, as both inconvenient and savouring a little of pedantic display, but Constance and Ellen persevered: Crabbe's "Tales of the Hall" having captivated one, and Bloomfield's "Farmer's Boy" the other. Our girls were Suffolk born, and had heard, but not yet read, those fine productions of their native county's poetical sons. However, young ladies

* Fact.

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of their age should not oppose the wishes of their friends in order to gratify their own, when they are taken to a strange house by the objectors, who are answerable in some measure for their behaviour and deportment.

Constance and Ellen awoke in the middle of one of those cloudless moonlight nights which resemble daylight so much that nothing but reference to the clock can lead to a right conclusion as to the true time. They supposed the housemaid had forgotten her promise, and began to dress themselves in some haste; while Bertha, who occupied a crib in the same apartment, insisted upon doing the same. They did not want Bertha's company at all. "She was," they said, "both mischievous and noisy; besides, she would be sure to awaken the house." Bertha persevered, and, pushing past her sisters on the staircase, got a fall, and broke into a loud roar, just as Constance and Ellen had discovered their error by seeing the full moon shining through the landing window.

"Oh, Bertha, pray leave off crying or you will awaken the family, for it is not yet day. Indeed, Bertha, you need not cry so much," said Constance and Ellen.

Now Bertha, though really more frightened

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than hurt, was a child unaccustomed to the least self-command; she cried if she met with the smallest accident, as unruly and tomboyish girls invariably do. She felt, like most roarers, positive pleasure in roaring, and thought herself in this present instance privileged to roar, and roar she did, only stopping her cries for an instant to make this angry rejoinder to her sisters' remonstrance,—"I dare say you would leave off crying, if you were as much hurt as I am."

"Dear Bertha, now don't begin to roar again, as you are well enough to leave off," said Constance, in a tone of entreaty.

But Bertha chose to scream again, like a tiresome naughty child as she was, and that in so vociferous a style that she fairly roused the sleepers in that part of the house, who issuing from their dormitories in hastily-made toilets, assembled on the spot to ascertain the cause. The good vicar and his wife, as soon as Aunt Mary had ascertained that Bertha had received no injury beyond a slight bruise, laughed heartily at this nocturnal adventure; Constance and Ellen, much ashamed of the confusion their mistake had caused in the family, retired to their beds; while Bertha, still sobbing, was

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taken into that occupied by Alice and Aunt Mary.

Bertha consoled herself by sulking a little, and giving Aunt Mary an occasional touch with her elbow, for she was too excited to sleep herself, and thus kept her old friend from taking any more rest that night. Alice, more fortunate, got some repose, and when she awoke expressed much pleasure upon finding Bertha quite out of pain. "You were frightened a great deal, my dear child, and you ought to be thankful that you were not seriously hurt, as I feared you were by your crying so much."

"I could not help crying, Miss Alice, and I was frightened too; besides, it eased my pain."

"But still I do not think you needed to go on again when once you had left off. I know that crying in the first instance does ease pain,* and you had done so quite long enough. We must not be selfish, and ease ourselves at the expense of the feelings of others. Have you forgotten your sister Ellen's behaviour when she met with that accident on the ice, and how she suppressed her cries to spare you as much as she could?"

* A medical fact.

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"I am sure then I roared for both," replied Bertha, pertly.

Alice looked grave, and would not laugh.

"No, Bertha, this subject is one that concerns all women too closely to be joked upon. Self-control is necessary in every stage of our lives. The common saying, 'A little help is worth a deal of pity,' applies to those of our sex who cry where they should give assistance. No doubt, those useless women were great roarers when they were children. Aunt Mary, I see, is asleep, so I will tell you what she did when she came into a cottage and found a good many women crying over a neighbour who had dropped on the ground in a swoon—the consequence of spasms in the heart. She persuaded them all but one to go away, and leave the door open, for fresh air—that air those foolish women were exhausting, and thereby adding to the danger of the patient; then she raised her head a very little, unloosed her dress, rubbed her cold hands, and ordered a bottle of warm water to be put to her feet, and when the doctor came in the poor woman was sitting up quite restored, we may almost say, to life again. Aunt Mary never cried for small matters when a child, because her mother felt those cries, as I believe all mothers

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do. Her self-command, you see, was the means of much good to the fainting female. Now, Bertha, I want you to try to acquire this habit. I am preaching you a little sermon, you see,—and if you cannot obtain it by your own efforts, pray to God to help you to gain it."

"Oh, Miss Alice, I always like your sermons. I never care how long they are."

"Then I will go on," said Alice, with one of her arch smiles. "I think you ought not to have vexed your sisters by insisting upon going down with them; and you would not have made the false step, that caused you both pain and fright, if you had not rudely pushed by them on the stairs: politeness is due to every one."

"But to my sisters politeness would be so very formal," rejoined Bertha.

"You ought to be more polite to your own family than to other persons, or else familiarity soon degenerates into rudeness. The word gentlewoman means a person using gentle language and practising polite ways. Some persons of mean birth have it by nature, and I have heard such called gentlewomen of God's own making. Of course, they had refined minds and mild tempers."

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"I am a gentlewoman born, Miss Alice; you know I am."

"It is not every one born of gentle blood that becomes a gentlewoman. You are when you behave like one."

Bertha blushed, and looked another way, for the shot told as Alice intended it should. "Then you do sometimes think so?"

"Yes, whenever the sound heart corrects the temper, and the will to please yourself is forgotten for a time in the wish to please other people."

"I suppose you think Constance and Ellen are gentlewomen?"

"Yes, they are; I never remember them otherwise, nor ever saw them masculine or rude."

"Is it wicked to be tomboyish, or masculine, as you call it?" asked Bertha.

"No; to be so is, properly speaking, only to be in bad taste. If Edward and John were to be girlish in manners and habits, that would be in bad taste; but not so annoyingly so as a masculine girl would be."

"You love Constance and Ellen, Miss Alice, but you cannot like me; yet they do not love you better than I do," said Bertha.

"I know you love me, and that is why I

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venture to tell you of your little faults. I love you quite as much as your sisters, when you are good." Miss Alice here took Bertha into a pair of loving arms, and kissed and embraced her tenderly.

"Oh, what a way she has with her," thought Bertha; "and somehow, though I want to and mean to be saucy to her, I never can, no never; it would really be very wicked if I were, for she is so meek, clever, and good. Ah, I wonder if with trying all my life I could be at all like Miss Alice."

Alice Malden, happily for this high-spirited and self-willed but generous child, had gained an ascendancy over her that Bertha Beverly could not shake off. Her influence was a Christian one, and was felt throughout her father's wide-spread parish, from the smallest urchin to that important personage the clerk, who always called her "our young lady" when speaking of her to the parishioners, with the honest pride of a Selwood man holding an important sacerdotal office in the Church.

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CHAPTER XII.

The Ford.—The Party in Danger.—Presence of Mind of the Groom.—The Visit prolonged.—Bertha's Fondness for Kittens.—Begs for the hapless Feline Family.—Quarrels with Aunt Mary.—The Kittens' Expulsion from the Carriage.—Bertha pockets one.—His Misbehaviour on the Journey.—She names him Meek.—His Accomplishments.—Her Letter in Meek's behalf to her Governess.—Reply of Mrs. Manners.—Meek does not become a Parlour-boarder.—His liking for Rabbits.—His Disappearance, Voyages, and *Catastrophe.*

VISITS, however pleasant, must terminate at last, though several hours of rain had promised our young ladies a day longer. About six, the shower ceased; and after tea, adieus had been spoken, and the party were on their homeward way to Selwood. As the moon would not rise till late, the lamps were lighted, and with the groom in attendance the occupiers of the phaeton travelled merrily on till they reached the ford with its railed foot-bridge. Alice, when she entered the little run, perceived that it was much deeper than usual; but, as she had often been driven through it by her father, did not suppose there was danger till the water came into the

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phaeton and the strong horse began to swim. Bertha laughed, while Constance and Ellen thought it looked like the beginning of an adventure. Alice felt dreadfully anxious; she would have stopped, but she found it was not in her power. The groom, however, who had dismounted, was on the bridge, and leaning over the rail, told Miss Malden to give him the reins, which he firmly tied to the rails, and then lifted each lady from the carriage and set her safely on the bridge. This accomplished, he rode into the stream, loosed the carriage reins, and turned the horse towards the side by which he had entered it. His cool courage and skill saved the lives of all,* for the water-mill was at work, and in a few minutes more the party would have been dashed by the current against the wheel. Alice and Aunt Mary audibly blessed God, Constance and Ellen wept, but Bertha, with the recklessness of her character, could not realize the fact that she had been in danger. I believe she was glad of anything that brought her back to the society of the lamb and cockatoo.

They had not proceeded half a quarter of a mile, on their return to the vicarage, when they

* Fact. This occasionally dangerous ford has still but a foot-bridge, yet it is the only direct way to a populous village.

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met the vicar and several men in search of them, whom the knowledge of the fact of the mill being at work had brought to their assistance. The groom hastened back to Selwood by another road to inform Mr. Beverly that the state of the ford would not permit the return of his family that evening.

A night of sound sleep made amends for past perils and dangers; and who was merrier than Bertha, surrounded, as she soon was, with pets of all kinds? While caressing the lamb, she heard Molly telling Patty that mistress's own cat had brought into the house six carrotty kittens, but that they were all to be killed, as fifteen cats were too much for one house.

"Six carrotty kittens!" remarked Bertha. "Let me see the darlings. Kill six kittens that can race about and play! How very cruel!"

Molly did the honours of the introduction to the doomed feline family, who, being fresh from some mysterious corner in a barn or outhouse, set up their backs and hissed and swore, after wild kitten fashion.

"I wonder whether they know how to purr," said Bertha, snatching up the finest of the litter. The kitten bit, cuffed, swore, and scratched, but Bertha persevered in her unwelcome attentions,

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till at last, by rubbing him under the chin, and imitating the call-note of his mamma, he really did begin to purr in good earnest.

"Only think of his singing to little miss," remarked the maids. "He fare right fond of her,"—for the maids were Suffolk born, and used the peculiar dialect of the county.

"I mean to have him, and call him Meek," said Bertha. "Indeed, I think I might as well ask for them all, for it is cruel to kill them now they are so full of fun."

"Miss, you see the cat was so subtle that she hid them up; and I am sure missus will give them to you rather than have them drowned. 'Tain't everybody that kind of fancy red kits."

Bertha brought Constance and Ellen to see the kittens. Her sisters, though they thought them very ugly, were willing enough to unite in petitioning for their lives. Their hostess was happy to be rid of them in a merciful way; but Aunt Mary made strong objections to this arrangement, which she knew would be an inconvenient one to their parents. She reminded Constance and Ellen that they each had a cat with young kittens, and that Bertha had two cats called Pinch and Patch. Besides these four cats, there were several stable cats, so that.

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she must not increase the stock by adding even one to the number, as Mr. Beverly had expressed himself very decidedly on that point on account of his game, cats being great poachers. Bertha looked daggers at Aunt Mary, and wondered why Alice did not interfere to save the unfortunate kittens.

Alice, who had a weakness for cats, had more than she knew what to do with: besides, no more were to be added to the cat-establishment of Selwood Hall; and, humane as she was, she would not countenance disobedience.

Bertha, however, had made up her mind; and the kittens were smuggled into the driving-box by the joint assistance of the maids and Robert the groom; Constance and Ellen promising not to object to this augmentation to their travelling party. The visitors departed at noon by a longer but safer route, but not without some regret. They had all been very happy with the good old couple, who had only to be known to be loved and esteemed.

In the very commencement of their journey, Aunt Mary thought she heard a poor kitten crying in the hedge, whereupon she fancied she saw an ill-repressed smile dimpling round the lips of both Constance and Ellen, and she was

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then sure the outcries came from the carriage itself, and soon discovered the hiding-place of Bertha's protégés. Alice was obliged to rise that the little creatures might be expelled; the whole five, however, made at once their way to the vicarage, with that singular home instinct that cats of all ages display when removed from their birthplace; and even Alice could not help laughing when she saw them set up their tails, and take the direct road to the house.

Bertha, who had not exposed her own fierce pet to the risk of being turned out of the driving-box, had him safely enough in her dress-pocket, which, unluckily for Meek's comfort, was not a very capacious one, and he, not liking the straitness of his prison, vented his kittenish displeasure in loud mews, growls, hisses, and struggles for his liberty with teeth and claws: vainly was a second search instituted, since, on these occasions Bertha put her hand over Meek's nose, half-smothering him in her efforts to stifle his cries. As soon as they were comfortably reseated, and Bertha allowed her pet to breathe, his cries became more vivacious, to the infinite delight of the girls, and even the amusement of Alice, who suspected that the little creature was secreted about Bertha. "There was some

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difference," she whispered to Aunt Mary, "between the introduction of one little kitten more to the rather extensive cat-establishment of Selwood Hall, and the addition of five;" and she amused the young people with a cat adventure which had befallen her father and an elderly nobleman with whom he was travelling.

"Everybody knows," said Alice, "that some persons have an unconquerable aversion to cats. My father's patron had this antipathy; and care was always taken to keep these harmless, domestic animals out of his way. Before commencing his journey from town to his own seat, his valet used to write to the inns where he would stop to refresh himself and his horses, to the effect that they should shut up the cats, and not allow even a kitten to appear in his sight. Of course, this precaution was usually attended to, though on one occasion it became the means of causing a greater amount of annoyance of this kind to his lordship than it was intended to remove. It happened that the landlord of the hotel at which his lordship was to dine, being very fond of cats, kept eight-and-twenty in his house—cats, indeed, of all sizes and ages. He had only lately taken this hotel; and, as Lord L—— was the first peer of the realm who had

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ordered a dinner in the house, he consented, though reluctantly, to shut them up in a large unfurnished room on the first landing on the staircase. Unfortunately, he left the door unlocked, after paying a visit of condolence to his beloved cats, while he hurried down to receive his guest.

"My lord was a very absent old gentleman, deaf, and exceedingly irascible. He was fatigued by the long journey and the officiousness of the landlord, and made at once to the fatal door, notwithstanding the warnings and attempts to oppose his entrance by his unlucky host; but the moment he entered the room the feline prisoners, who were on bad terms with one another, knocked him down in their precipitate escape, and the whole number passed over his prostrate person, scratching, swearing, and cuffing one another, to his lordship's infinite disgust and terror.* My father assisted him to rise; but it was some time before he could induce him to accept the poor landlord's apology, or believe that the accident caused by his own mistake was not a premeditated insult, in the shape of a practical joke."

* Fact.

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The young people could not help laughing at this odd *cat*astrophe, and by this time kitten Meek was asleep; nor did he indulge in any more cat-vocabulary till Bertha, after taking him carefully from his prison—her pocket—introduced him to her mamma. She related his history with so much energetic feeling, that Meek was suffered to remain, upon condition that he was not to appear too often in the sitting room. Meek soon proved his name to be a misnomer. Never was a kitten more savage. Nobody dared touch him but Bertha; she, however, not only subdued his fierce nature, but taught him to jump, to shake hands, to catch like a squirrel, and to sit up and hold down his paws in a petitioning manner, that really made him look meekly. Still he would swear unless he was instantly rewarded, and woe to the hand of any one but Bertha's, that presumed to bestow a donation on her ungrateful pet.

Bertha felt a very maternal anxiety for the welfare of her wayward kitten; for the end of the vacation was at hand, and Meek, like the pensive Selina in Gray's Elegy, shared the fate of most favourites, only he had one friend. Mamma, to be sure, had promised to take care of him—still, mamma was not always in the

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way. The gamekeeper, that destroyer of unhappy stray pusses, had eyed Meek with a glance that said unutterable things, yet easily to be guessed by one as sharpsighted and deeply interested as Miss Bertha Beverly was in the fate of her kitten. She was, we know, a resolute young lady, and having determined to take Meek to school (Constance supposed) to learn good manners—of which, indeed, he was terribly in want,—she wrote the following letter to her governess :—

"DEAR MADAM,—I am coming back to school in a few days, with my sisters, and though I have enjoyed my holidays, I shall be glad to see you again, because I love you very much. I mean to try and be a good girl; for I know I must have been a great plague to you at first. I have been naughty at home sometimes; but mamma says I am an improving character. I am to learn to draw, this half year, which I shall like better than music; for I hate counting the time, which I think a bore. Just as if people said 'one, two, three, four,' when playing to their friends! Of course, if they did, everybody would laugh. I should delight in music, if it were not for that. I have been drawing with papa, and found it such a nice amusement!

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and as I have got on pretty well with him, I mean to attend to my drawing lessons, that I may be able to take my pet kitten Meek's picture. You must know all about him, because I want you to let me bring him with me to school. I saved the darling's life when I was on a visit, and brought him home in my pocket. Nobody likes poor Meek but me, for he spits and swears at every body else; but then he knows no better. He is very kind to me, and I have taught him to shake hands, to jump, to catch like a squirrel, and to sit up and hold his paws like a kangaroo, and he is a very good mouser. Meek is very pretty—a red kitten with bright spots all over his glossy yellow coat. I love him so much that I do not know how to part with him, and if you would let him come to school as a parlour boarder, I would pay for his meat and milk out of my allowance. An early answer, dear madam, will oblige

"Your affectionate pupil,

"BERTHA BEVERLY.

"SELWOOD HALL,
"*January* 25."

Bertha received the following letter from Mrs. Manners, by return of post:—

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"My dear Miss Bertha,—Although I am not particularly impressed in kitten Meek's favour, even from your partial account of him and his accomplishments, yet I shall be happy to receive him as a parlour boarder for the sake of his dear little mistress. I am glad you take so much delight in drawing, for which you have a considerable talent, and the master I have engaged for that accomplishment being remarkably clever, I think you will come on very well with him. I cannot agree with you about not counting the time, for there can be no good music without correct time, and so you will find when you understand it better.

"With compliments to your papa and mamma, and love to yourself and your dear sisters,

"I remain, dear Miss Bertha,

"Your affectionate friend,

"Louisa Manners.

"Bellevue House,
"*January* 26."

Bertha was overjoyed at the permission given by Mrs. Manners for Meek's coming to Bellevue House as a parlour boarder, and she purchased and lined a commodious cat-basket for the com-

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fortable conveyance of her ferocious pet, but her money and industry were both expended in vain, for Bertha took a bad cold, and was not able to go back to school that quarter. Meek, before she was able to return, had become such an intolerable plague to everybody that no one was sorry for his mysterious disappearance but his little mistress, who lamented him with many tears, and could not be comforted for his loss. Now, Meek was not dead, for while Bertha was bemoaning his untimely fate, he was delighting the crew of the brig *Active* by the display of those accomplishments he had acquired during his brief abode at Selwood Hall. His transfer to Captain Clint's cabin had been effected during the darkness of a moonless Saturday night, in consequence of his having been detected in the morning by the gamekeeper with a leveret in his mouth twice as big as himself, who not only denounced him to his master, but also informed him that the captain of the brig *Active* being in want of a cat, a happy riddance could be made of Meek without killing him, and that Miss Bertha need not know it till after the vessel had sailed. Mr. Beverly thought it best to say nothing about Meek's voyage to London, and Bertha did not know that her favourite was

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living till many months had elapsed from his transfer to the *Active*. Meek sailed for ten years out of Selby harbour, had grown a fine animal, and was much prized by the captain and crew, with whom he went down in the brig in a terrible November gale on the homeward voyage,* having had upon the whole a much happier life than generally falls to the lot of his useful but persecuted species.†

* Fact.

† We have related Meek's eventful history and final *cat*astrophe out of its proper chronology, to gratify the curiosity of those readers who may feel interested in his fate.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Improvement of John and Edward.—Charitable Working Party.—Bertha and her Mamma's Maid.—Visit to Widow Taylor's Cottage.—Parish rounds with Alice.—Old Timothy and his Night-cap.—The Dying Girl and the Aged Couple.—Rules for profitable Cottage Visiting.

Edward Beverly and his brother John, having devoted their pocket-money to repay their father for the loan he advanced for them, would still have remained considerably in his debt if he had not found employment for them in copying letters and keeping accounts for him. He paid them liberally for their work, and though they found these demands on their time and patience trying at first, they soon realized the meaning of the scriptural aphorism, that "In all labour there is profit." Work made them enjoy play, wet days were no longer dull days, they had something to do: John no longer kicked his feet against tables and chairs in a clownish manner, nor was Edward so ill-bred as to yawn aloud as he had been accustomed formerly to do. Industry really leads to good manners; idle people rarely learn the art of sitting still.

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Constance, Ellen, and Bertha were devoting their leisure hours for the benefit of their moneyless brothers, by working for mamma in various ways, for which labour they were to be paid. They kept the household book, overlooked the housekeeper's accounts, marked the new table and bed linen, in order that the purses they had made should not be empty upon the boys' return to school. These generous intentions were to be kept secret; for the purses with their contents were to be slipped into John and Edward's boxes while they were being packed up. But all their labour was not bestowed upon their brothers alone. Mamma had given poor Widow Taylor a new gown as she wanted one badly, and our young ladies wished to make it up for her, as she could not see to work on black stuff herself. Mrs. Beverly's maid cut it out and fixed it, and each of our young sempstresses took a part. Now, united labour, especially when the labour is employed in works of charity, is a pleasant thing. Alice Malden, who was knitting a warm shawl for the poor woman, brought her work and chatted so nicely while pursuing her mechanical employment, that the time glided on very quickly, as indeed well-spent time always does, and even Bertha forgot her pricked finger, and almost felt

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sorry when the task was finished. The maid who had taken in hand to inspect the work now examined the young ladies' stitching in the manner good workwomen always do, by giving plaits and gathers a little pull, to see that they were firm, but finally pronounced "that it would do."

Constance and Ellen were rather mortified by this faint praise. They had taken infinite pains, and had pricked their fingers very much. Bertha was not so quiescent in the matter, but said, with a frowning brow, "So, Mrs. Carter, if that is all you have got to say to our work, I think you had better have held your tongue. I know the work is as good and strong as it well can be, and you ought to have said so. We have pricked our fingers till they bled — only look at mine."

"Yes, Miss Bertha, I see; and I am thinking that if the material had not been black it would have been spoiled. What would your mamma think of me if I were to mark the white satin dress I am making up for her in that awkward sort of way? You need not look so cross, miss, for I said the work would do — meaning, of course, for a poor woman's stuff gown, where nothing but strong work was required—that was

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why I tested it. I find you want more praise than is your due as far as sewing is concerned; but I do think it was very kind to spend your spare time in making this old widow's gown, particularly as you are not fond of your needle. But pricking your fingers was of no use to her, and therefore was no merit in you."

Carter was a blunt, honest woman, who never said more than she thought it right to say; but sometimes said what she had better have left unsaid, besides there was no liking between her and Miss Bertha. Of course, she knew that the fixing and cutting out of the gown was the most valuable part of the workmanship; but of that, seemingly, Miss Bertha thought little enough. In the contest, the young lady had got the worst of it, as young ladies always must do in a war of words with menials.

Alice, ever a peacemaker, remarked upon the kindness with which Mrs. Carter had seconded the good intentions of the ladies, and asked Bertha, "If she had seen the neat cap and bonnet that she was making at her own cost of time and material for the widow?"

This was an effectual way of bringing the belligerent parties into a right feeling with each other. Bertha, who was generous herself, could

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estimate that quality in another, and Mrs. Carter was not sorry to show the cap and bonnet upon which she had expended her leisure time, money, and skill. "How neat, how very pretty, how very good of you, Carter," was the general exclamation, in which Bertha heartily joined.

"Poor Widow Taylor has seen better days," replied Carter; "and no one knows what privations are endured by small housekeepers to keep a roof over their heads. I do not mind what I do for them; but I leave the very poor to contrive and sew for themselves."

"Why, Carter?" asked Ellen, much surprised.

"Miss Ellen, they generally have children to sew for them; I would relieve their wants as far as I could, but not with my time and skill, when less valuable labour would do for them as well as mine. Because I am a good hand at mantua-making and millinery, and dress a lady well, I get good wages; and my doing things that a girl at a shilling a day could do I should think bad management."

"But is that benevolent?" asked Constance, doubtfully. "I know you have a feeling heart, and so I venture to ask the question."

"In my idea it is," replied Carter, quietly, "for most women can sew and cut and contrive

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for themselves; if they cannot they ought to learn."

"What does Alice think?" asked Ellen, whose own judgment was formed upon the warm unreflecting feelings of early youth.

"I am obliged to confess myself of Mrs. Carter's opinion," replied the clergyman's daughter. "Once I thought as you do, and I dare say as she used to do; but experience has taught us both that 'the best way of helping people is to teach them to help themselves.' Abbot's clever book, 'The Way to Do Good,' was a useful guide to me in this respect, and now I never sew for any but those who cannot work for themselves, and have nobody else to do it for them. I buy materials for the very poor, by the bounty of charitable friends, or apply to my father, or retrench my own personal expenses for that purpose, and then I sometimes assist in cutting out, or direct the cutters out. Mending is now taught in the school as a regular branch of female education, only of course we require the worn articles to be quite clean. Perhaps, Constance, you will smile when I tell you that some are pieced and others patched."

"Is there any difference?" asked Constance.

"A good deal," replied Alice; "piecing is

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rather a nice operation; for when the garment to be mended is pretty good, we cut a square out and replace it with a new piece just large enough to allow for the turnings neatly grafted in, while a patch is a piece laid over the cloth, and which is not cut away from under it. I think, my dear girls, you would like to know how I came to make mending a part of female education at our national school. My father was for a brief period a chaplain in a palace where apartments were assigned to many persons of position, and he was delighted and surprised, when paying a professional visit to a young lady of rank, to find her surrounded by a group of women to whom she was reading a pious book, while they were mending old clothes. He soon discovered that this sweet young creature had been fixing pieces for them with the assistance of her maid, and was actually teaching them this necessary branch of female economy. After several conversations with her on the subject, they both agreed that it would have been better if these poor ignorant women had learned this art in childhood, and that it ought to be regularly taught in all day-schools. He was delighted with one so young, high-born and beautiful, giving up time and talent which so many are

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prone to waste in idle dissipation. It pleased God to call her to himself in the morning of her days, but her example remains with the survivors. 'She did what she could for His glory, and was found watching.'"*

"I pity her poor mother," remarked Constance.

"Her mother was dead," rejoined Alice, "but her poor father lost all that made life dear in losing his only child. Yet, dear Constance, the time will come when the precious memory of his daughter will lead his thoughts more and more upwards to that heaven where he knows she is, and where he also hopes and wishes to be."

The friends having now finished their work, agreed to take a nice walk that afternoon to Widow Taylor's cottage; and Alice, whose position as the rector's daughter gave her the *entrée* into every house in the parish, promised to introduce Constance, Ellen, and Bertha to those she visited, as a sort of preparation to district visiting, in which the two elder ladies were to take part as soon as they left school. Mrs. Beverly was pleased with any arrangement that would increase the influence of Alice Malden, whose active Christianity had nothing of that austerity that often proves so alarming to young

* Fact.

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people. Her piety was like the full deep stream, not the babbling brook, and was a faith working by love, and productive of good works.

Widow Taylor was delighted to see Alice and the dear young ladies; nor was she less pleased when Carter opened the wicker-box and produced the gown, the cap, the bonnet, and the knitted shawl—the finishing stitches of the last article having been set at Selwood Hall that very morning by Alice, during her visit. The poor widow, who had lately shed many tears on account of her dimmed eyesight and altered circumstances, now wept for joy. A nice Sunday suit, complete, was an unlooked-for blessing, and though nothing but sickness could keep Anne Taylor from church, she had struggled to subdue the mortification that her rusty black gown gave her whenever she put it on; for even pious women like to be neat and nice on the Sunday. The raiment she then had on was patched and darned so much, that it was evidently fit for nothing but to wear on washing days or the Saturday's weekly house cleanings. The old Sunday gown would now supply its place. Alice gave her kind attention to all these matters, and then, as she was wont to do, sat down to read that precious Gospel given by Him who had

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shared the wants of the poor, and which always cheered and consoled the heart of that solitary, childless woman.

The next cottage they visited was not thus overshadowed by the blessing of the Most High: it was inhabited by an ill-living old, very old couple, who had followed the crooked paths of fraud and dishonesty all their lives, and were reaping the fruits of the misery they had sown. Sickness, however, and the workings of conscience had awakened the woman to the sense of the danger of sin. Not so the man; he was wrapt up in selfishness, and disliking the turn his wife had taken, made a point of coughing down Mr. Malden whenever he paid a pastoral visit to his wife. To Alice he was more respectful, because she sent him broth and puddings, or perhaps he remembered lifting her out of the carriage which brought her, when a little child, with her parents to Selwood Rectory. However this might be, Timothy was always on his best behaviour to Alice. Her arrival was considered at this moment remarkably well-timed; for old Tim (his general appellation in the parish) was suffering from a swelled face, and being impatient under affliction, "had just," the women said, "'venged himself upon

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his night-cap, which he had torn in two pieces, as if that could ease his pain."

Bertha broke into a fit of laughter, as ill-timed and improper as the vengeance the impatient man had inflicted upon his night-cap. A reproving glance from Alice, and a warning from the man's good daughter-in-law, who was stitching up the divided night-cap, made her check her risibility.

"Miss, if you laugh he will strike you; for he is very savage in his temper, and no respecter of persons. Besides, you should not laugh at poor folks who have no manners."

Alice, who pitied the pain that had caused this violence, gently condoled with the sufferer, and advised fomenting the swelled face with a flannel and warm water; and seeing that the women seemed afraid of old Tim, borrowed an apron and a towel, and proceeded to foment the swollen cheek till some ease was given; and by the time the night-cap was sewn together and warmed, old Tim became tractable, and allowed it to be put on his head, when Alice and her companions took their leave.

The next cottage exhibited a very different picture; for an aged man was reading to a young woman in the last stage of consumption, and so intently were they engaged, that none but the

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wife, who was sewing, perceived that the latch had been lifted to admit visitors. Alice put her finger to her lip, and stood silently regarding the interesting pair. He at the extreme verge of life, and heavenward bent, was smoothing the path thitherward to that young, lovely girl, not yet nineteen, whose intense attention was only interrupted by the hollow cough hastening her to an early grave. But the beautiful and consoling Psalm was ended, and Alice and her friends were welcomed warmly, yet with due respect. It was pleasant to hear that dying girl speak of the kindness of these good old people, to whom till lately she had been a stranger,—for she was an orphan, who having fallen sick in service, was kindly cared for by a former mistress, who paid for her quarters* and provided for her wants. She spoke of the tender, loving care of these worthy old people towards her with deep gratitude,—care for which money could not pay, but which God, she trusted, would one day reward.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" were the words of our Lord quoted by St. Paul, and surely the gifts of this pious couple in tender care and pious teaching, filled them with that joy which the world can neither give nor take away.

* A Suffolk term for lodgings.

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Our young people were well-disposed to become cottage visitors. Bertha thought she must laugh sometimes, only old Tim had looked as if he wanted to beat her.

"You must be more guarded, Bertha, for in cottage visiting you must never laugh, never be familiar, never be angry, never listen to nor repeat gossip. You come on a Christian mission, and must maintain your position by propriety of conduct, otherwise you will do no good to yourself or those you visit."

The delivery of this lecture brought Alice to the parsonage gate, where her young friends were to finish the day, which they did very pleasantly, for no one could perform the part of the hostess better than Alice Malden.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Bread.—Preference of a Russian General for that of his own Country.—Substitutes for Bread in various Countries.—Wheat not found wild in any Land.—Mummy Wheat.—Wheat and its many Coats.—Maritime Pea.—Waste a Sin.—Bertha's prudent Resolution put in practice.

BERTHA was assisting her father to arrange one of his cabinets, an employment both, she often found, profitable and lucrative—some odds and ends generally falling to her share.

"You may have that, Bertha, to put into the cabinet Mason is making for you when it comes home," said Mr. Beverly, putting a brown hard substance into his daughter's hand.

Bertha received the article somewhat ungraciously. "Is it a piece of wood, papa, that I am to put into a pretty new cabinet, as your gift?"

"How rude," remarked mamma, reprovingly.

"I only wanted to know, dear mamma," replied Bertha, in an apologetic tone, "why papa wished me to keep it,—but of course if it were of no use he would not have laid it by: but I believe it is not wood after all."

"It is Riga bread—ship-bread I should have said. Try to eat a piece, Bertha."

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"It is as hard as stone, papa; how can people eat such bread as this?"

"You are not used to it; those who are accustomed to eat it find no fault with it. A Selby merchant vessel, trading to Russia, was blocked in the ice at Riga, and compelled by the early winter to remain till the spring; when her crew's stock of biscuit was exhausted they tried the bread of the country, which they found even more unpalatable than this ship biscuit, for that was made of rye, fish-bones reduced to gelatine, and the bark of some tree. This biscuit they boiled in milk, after previously soaking it in water; but they came home thin, and by no means satisfied with their hard fare. I was given the biscuit you have in your hand, which has been twenty years in my possession without showing any change. It is neither mouldy, nor decayed, nor, although it has a sour smell, does its acidity seem at all increased by age. Certainly our English sailors did not thrive upon it; yet the natives of the shores of the Baltic are a strong hardy race, and they are well contented with it. They boil it in a kettle till it is reduced to a soft pulp, and make it into a palatable porridge with milk and aniseeds, in which state they prefer it to any other bread food."

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"I thought, dear papa, that in the north of Europe the finest wheat in the world was grown," remarked Constance. "Poland belongs to Russia, then why do not the Russians eat the Polish wheat?"

"It is almost all sent to the English market. The better sort of people eat coarse rye bread, the poorer the black loaves or biscuits I have described.

"The Polish wheat is laid up in the granaries of Dantzic for exportation, from which circumstance it takes its name. The Russian people are satisfied with rye, but if they were not they would have no choice in it, as they are, or very lately were, in a state of semi-slavery which once prevailed here and all over Europe, called serfdom. In some cases, the peasant or serf was fed and clothed by his master, who took his labour for his food, clothing, and lodging. Along the shores of the Baltic the serf was worse off, as he had nothing found him but a hut and patch of land, and was compelled to work three days out of the week for his master's benefit. In all these cases, though the lord could not put his serf to death, he could flog him severely with impunity. This dreadful state of things will not last long, the education of the higher classes alone must

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induce progress, by making the master more merciful—the slave less brutal."

"I think," said Bertha, "that nobody can really like such food, though being serfs they are obliged to eat it."

"There you are wrong, my dear, as you shall hear. A celebrated French author,* when travelling in Russia, was invited to dinner by a Russian general. The table was covered with delicacies, of which his staff, but not the general, partook. The distinguished host was eating a plate of grey porridge, the appearance of which rather excited the curiosity of the French officer than stimulated his appetite. Apparently, no other person wished to partake of this odd-looking soup, as the contents of the silver tureen remained untouched before the general, who, observing that his guest was examining it attentively, gave him some, and was seemingly amused by the wry faces he was endeavouring to hide, for this porridge so relished by the great man was no other than what I have described to you. 'I was born a Finland peasant,' said his host, 'and I am now a Russian general; but my rise in the service has not deprived me of my old appetite for the coarse food of my

* St. Pierre.

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native country, which I prefer to all the delicacies on my table.' Custom, my dear child, and a healthy appetite, make the food we have been used to agreeable to most of us. If you ask me what bread I like best and think the sweetest, I should reply that made of rye and wheat ground together without the bran being taken from it by the practice of sifting. I spent, you know, my early life in Yorkshire, where this sort of bread is in general use, and found it delicious."

"I wish, papa, you would tell us something more about different kinds of bread in use in foreign countries," said Ellen.

"You have seen the oaten and barley bread of Scotland, and the havre bread of Lancashire?"

"Yes, papa; I did not dislike the Scotch bread; but I did not like the thin flat squares of oaten bread I saw at Ulverston in a great basket they called a swill, though it was the bread used by working people, who liked it if I did not; Constance brought a piece with her to Selwood, and nobody would touch it but the pony, who took it out of her hand and looked as if he wanted more."

"In Canada and the United States, though they grow fine white wheat, maize or Indian corn is generally preferred. John grew some in

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his garden last summer, and it ripened very well; it is grown in Italy and many other European countries, and makes good bread. Millet is much used in Asia, while rice boiled is the general substitute for bread in India. The sago-palm (*Cygas circinalis*, or *Sago farinifera*) provides the Indian islands with bread. This useful palm requires no cultivation, and grows spontaneously in many parts of India. It vegetates slowly, and comes up covered with thorns, which fall off as soon as the stem is formed, when the tree gradually attains the height of thirty feet. Its ligneous bark of about an inch in thickness covers a multitude of long fibres, closely interwoven together, which envelope a mass of gummy meal. As soon as the tree is ripe, a whitish dust transpires through the pores of the leaves and adheres to their extremities. The Malays, knowing by this sign that the trees are fit, cut them down near the root, and divide them into sections, which are split into quarters. They then scoop out the mass of mealy substance enveloped in the fibres, which they dilute with pure water and pass it through a straining-bag of fine cloth to separate it from the fibres. When this paste has lost by evaporation a part of its moisture, they put it into earthen vessels

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to dry and harden. It then becomes wholesome nourishing food, and will keep good for years. The Indians either eat it mixed with water, or baked, or boiled. The best is reserved for the aged and infirm, from a principle of humanity that does them credit. The jelly made by boiling sago is well known to you all.

"The Sandwich islanders are supplied with bread by a fruit resembling in size and taste a new penny loaf, a wonderful production in countries where bread was unknown. It was planted with success in the West India islands, to which it has also proved a blessing.

"The numerous groups of islands with which the Pacific Ocean is dotted, and whose wondrous formation we have already discussed, are supplied by the cocoa-nut with bread, and most other necessaries of life. This species of palm provides them with a vegetable milk, with utensils, with cordage for their canoes, with mats to sleep upon; while the kernel is their substitute for bread. A plant, belonging to a class and order in which virulent poisons abound, provides for the New Zealander in its edible roots materials for a light and nutritious bread, in an arum, a wholesome member of the species. Arrowroot is also in use for the same purpose; it derives its English name

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from its being an antidote to the poison used by the Indians to render the wounds given by their arrows mortal to man or beast. This poison, whatever it may be, does not prevent the flesh of the beasts taken in the chase from being eaten, as the hunters constantly make use of it; hence we call the Maranta arrowroot. In Kamschatka, where no corn is grown, the root of a yellow lily serves the richer natives for bread, but it is too rare to form 'the staff of life.' But dried fish is much used there, and those natives who are nomadic live much on milk and the flesh of the animals they take in the chase."

"What is being nomadic, papa?" asked Bertha.

"You know the sort of life the patriarchs lived when they fed their flocks, and moved from place to place, 'having no abiding city here,' and seeking one not built with hands, eternal, in the heavens.' They were in the nomadic, or wandering shepherd state, as all nations have been before they learned to cultivate land and build houses. Of course a people in this case are subject to famine if a murrain takes their cattle, or pasturage fails. When thus pressed by want they fall upon the pastures

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of other tribes, till at length they reach cultivated countries, and either seize upon the fruits of civilization, or become civilized themselves."

"Is corn ever found growing wild?" asked Constance.

"Barley and oats have been discovered in a wild state, wheat never; for though Egypt claims the honour of being its parent soil, it has not been found indigenous there. We read of it in the Book of Genesis, and find it in the ancient Egyptian tombs. There is a coarse but abundantly prolific sort called mummy wheat, from having been found in the cases that enclosed mummies. It was sown by way of experiment and grew, although its age was perhaps not less than four thousand years: it was of the bearded kind.

"How wonderful!" exclaimed the young people.

"Wheat possesses a great number of coats which preserve it from the injuries of time. You know, I dare say, that corn of every kind is a species of grass—and it has even been supposed that different sorts of grasses have been cultivated into wheat, barley, oats, and millet, rye, &c."

"I have seen," observed Constance, "grasses

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resembling them all; but none like wheat, that seems to have no parallel in wild plants."

"By a beautiful arrangement of Providence, we find almost every country in the world provided with farinaceous food in some shape or other, whether in the forms of the seeds of grasses, like corn; or roots, as in the potato, arrowroot, and arum; or enclosed in trees, like sago; or in nuts, as the cocoa and chestnut; or in fruit, like the bread-fruit: and we know not which to admire the most—the excellence, the variety, or the abundance of the food thus provided for man."

Ellen reminded papa that he had forgotten pulse in his enumeration of farinaceous food, and she thought tares and the maritime pea would furnish flour.

Mr. Beverly replied, he had seen on the eastern coast the *Pisum maritimum* growing on the beach, that it had a white blossom, and a pod resembling the common garden pea; but though it was probably the original plant from which our peas were derived, it was small and not so well flavoured.

Ellen had read, that several centuries ago the poor on the east coast of Suffolk had gathered enough of these maritime peas to support them

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in the time of a great famine; but neither Constance nor herself could find the plant, though they had searched for it on the spot where it had been found during that period of dearth. She supposed not a single pea had escaped the search of the famished poor.

Edward asked papa why some people seemed to think that if the world got very full of people, they must be starved.

"They are very short-sighted persons who say so, Edward; for God, who sends people into the world, will also provide for their wants; that is, He gives the means, but the industry of man must be exerted to make them available. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,' was the doom of every child of Adam since it was pronounced to the erring father of mankind by God Himself. Health, strength, and competence, the fruits of this necessity, have turned it into a threefold blessing. There is, in the ways of Providence a beautiful fitness and harmony, never to be found in those of man. The Divine economy provides for the wants of the creatures, so that there shall be a sufficiency, but no excess; whoever wastes or throws away food, or even takes a larger portion than temperance enjoins, is depriving some other person

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of his rightful share, and breaks a law of nature.

"We may receive practical lessons upon careful expenditure even from the air we breathe; for what is no longer fit for animal respiration, by our exhaustion of its purest portion, is imbibed by the vegetable kingdom, to which it gives life and vigour. Plants, in fact, if they absorb in the day the oxygen gas fitted for man's lungs, give it back during the night. We may indeed trace the Divine law of economy throughout nature. You know that your mother and myself are careful on the head of waste, and have endeavoured to impress it upon our children and household."

"Papa," said John, "I have never thrown away a piece of string since I read 'Waste Not, Want Not."

"Nor I," rejoined Edward, "and I know Con and Ellen take care of odds and ends, for when I want handsome streamers for my new boats, I ask them, and they are sure to find me some."

"By which my dolls are great losers," remarked Bertha; "and I think I ought to have the first choice, as pieces of silk and ribbon are more in a girl's way."

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"You should save for yourself, Bertha, and not be dependent upon your sister's economy."

"I really will, papa, for the future; and will make two bags — one for pretty pieces, and one for worn scraps of linen and calico."

"Why, Bertha, do you mean to set up the trade of a rag-merchant?" asked Edward.

"A rag-merchant — no; my rags are for dressing wounds. I shall give them to Miss Alice, who keeps a bag in her store-room for that purpose." And Bertha made the bags that very day. This cheap charity, being of great use to sufferers in every rank of life, deserves to be imitated. The material can be saved, but is not to be bought; and any feeling and careful child in a family can collect worn pieces of linen or calico. Linen keeps wounds cooler than cotton; but cotton excludes the air better: but both are invaluable as dressings for wounds. The hems and seams should be carefully cut off, as they would cause irritation to the wound. Care should be taken to lock up the bag in the store-room or some other safe place, as Alice's whole stock was once appropriated by her brothers for wadding for their guns, to her

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great mortification and the discomfort of some poor sufferers who missed this cheap but useful charity. You may be sure Alice kept her treasures of this kind in a secure place from that day forward.

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CHAPTER XV.

The Breaking-up.—What had been Gained by each Scholar in Holiday Time.—Mental and Moral Improvement of Bertha.—Her own Opinion as to its Cause.—Beneficial Effects from the new way of spending Christmas Holidays.

The Christmas holidays were over. Trunks were packed, and parting gifts exchanged; for our young party were about to separate for their respective schools, all but Bertha, who had taken cold, and was too unwell and feverish to travel in winter weather. Bertha was too much pleased with the arrangement to complain much of her indisposition; but she was greatly improved in mind and manners, though "there had been work and no romping." Not that mamma's prohibition extended to play or healthy exercise, only to noisy hoydenish ways and boyish sports, for which we know Bertha had, unfortunately, some predilection. She had, with her father's help, made several pretty drawings, and acquired a taste for natural history; she had left off rude practical jokes, and abjured sliding on the ice. She had worked a collar for mamma; b

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mended her stockings without annoying her neighbour; had left off turning up her little nose, in an offensive manner, at people she did not like, and had attended to Alice Malden's sermons, and profited by them; she was more affectionate to her sisters, and took pains to please them. Aunt Mary praised her very much; but then we know she had rather a weakness for Bertha. In reciting our reclaimed tom-boy's improvements and acquirements, we have omitted the useful arts she had learned of Alice Malden, of making apple-tarts and rice puddings, and how Carter had taught her the proper way of cutting out and making, in the newest fashion, dolls' frocks. Of various caps, formed of odds and ends of worsted, braided and sewn together, for the adornment of Pinch, Patch, and Meek, we need not say much, as the creatures did not seem to appreciate the time and skill she had employed for their benefit, and showed plainly enough by their resistance to the putting on, that if the caps pleased Miss Bertha they did not fit them. In the exercise of head work and finger work Bertha had been very happy. One dark spot, we know, had thrown a shadow over the early part of her holiday time, but Ellen had re-

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covered the effect of Bertha's rash folly, and Bertha had not forgotten its bitter experience.

Constance and Ellen had mingled the useful and ornamental in their daily life while at home. They had practised their accomplishments with mamma and made two fine shirts for papa. They had learned of their friend Alice to be useful; had visited with her the cottages of the poor, and assisted her in teaching the Sunday-school. They had delighted in the conversations in which papa had permitted them to take a part, and had spent their holidays much to their own satisfaction, without pining for the exciting amusements usually considered indispensable at this sociable season of the year.

John and Edward had been partly cured of those unruly and selfish tricks that render the company of some schoolboys frequently so intolerable to their friends during the vacation. Their self-inflicted impoverishment had deprived them of the indulgences procurable by a liberal allowance, while uneasy consciences had told them that they had injured a poor widow and destroyed valuable animals—living creatures who had felt and suffered—for the sake of gratifying an unwarrantable love of fun; or rather wanton mischief disguised under that

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name. The golden law of restitution so wisely enforced by their father had made good the poor widow's loss, and had been the means of her becoming an out-door pensioner of the charitable lady of Selwood Hall; but all parents are not so considerate as Mr. and Mrs. Beverly, and the false indulgence of some would have rendered these boys selfish and improvident for life. After this event, Edward and John had conducted themselves well; they had done something useful every day, with the laudable intention of repaying their father the large sum he had advanced for them. They had learned to saddle, bridle, and put a horse into harness; had acquired some dexterity in the use of carpenters' tools; and had fitted up, with their father's assistance, their own fishing cabinets. John, too, had done some twine netting at odd times. Employment kept our boys out of harm's way, and their studies with papa they soon found to be pleasant recreations. They liked to talk about what they read to their sisters, who generally worked while they took their lessons. This was a sure way of remembering the stirring events of English history.

Edward, after his classic researches to discover what Julius Cæsar was remarkable for at table,

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had discarded the odious vice of gluttony, and could be safely trusted to divide any delicacy, without the danger of his appropriating the largest share to himself. His reformation had a good effect upon his younger brother, who had followed his example, as younger brothers often do.

Partings are painful things at the best, and Bertha's indisposition rendered the separation from her a sorrowful one to Constance and Ellen, by whom the warm-hearted child was much beloved; then there was Aunt Mary and Alice, dear Alice, to leave; and above all the good parents whose watchful love had left them nothing to wish for. "Ah! these have been such happy holidays," said these sweet girls as they kissed their parents; "we never enjoyed them so much before." "Next half, we hope, will be better still," rejoined the boys; "for summer time is so pleasant, and we hope to bring back good characters with us to Selwood, and Bertha will be quite well, and we shall be so happy together again."

Bertha was not able to go to school for a month longer, when she returned to Mrs. Manners much improved, but without Meek, whose mysterious disappearance and voyages a-

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travels have been already narrated, somewhat out of place. She was received with much affection by Mrs. Manners, to whom she was much attached. Her governess was surprised at her pupil's improvement, and told her so, whereupon Bertha assured her that it all came from mamma and papa having found out a new way for them all of spending the Christmas holidays, which had been very happy ones, though they each had had something to do and think about.

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